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New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/51/366/Add.2)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/51/366/Add.2, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications dated 17 and 20 September 1996, Equatorial Guinea has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I call now on His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al-Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure, Sir, to extend to you our sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. We are confident that you will lead the work of the Assembly to success. I cannot fail to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, for his leadership during the Assembly's historic fiftieth session. I would also like to express our appreciation to His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts in the service of the purposes of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and the achievement of its lofty ideals.

A series of internal conflicts and explosive situations has threatened certain States. The world faces ethnic extremism and national conflicts caused by mass migrations, flows of refugees, environment deterioration and natural disasters. Such problems have not been met with the rapid economic and political changes that would form the cornerstone of the new international order to which the whole world aspires. A complete vision of that order, its rules and means, has not yet materialized. We should all work towards an international system that is just, balanced and comprehensive.

The vital and effective role played by the United Nations in dealing with international issues, in the maintenance of international peace and security and in other areas, the value of which cannot be denied or underestimated for the establishment of the principles of that international system, requires reform of the United Nations if we are to achieve the desired results. Reform should begin with reactivating the General Assembly to

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enable it to act effectively in a manner that would enhance its credibility in the eyes of world public opinion.

We have also mentioned the need to reform the Security Council and increase its effectiveness in a manner that would reflect the geographic, economic and political situation of certain States, in a manner that would reflect the new international order, and would equip the Council to bear its heavy responsibilities.

The task of maintaining international peace and security is particularly important at a time of international change; the international community should take steps to deploy early preventive measures, since this is the best way to avoid the eruption and conflagration of conflicts, instead of resorting to political or military measures to end them, which can only lead to incomplete and unjust solutions. Therefore, it is important to reiterate the vital and effective role that could be played by regional organizations in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

Cooperation between the United Nations and other regional organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference should be promoted, since preventive diplomacy and early warning are the best way to prevent conflicts from erupting and to find peaceful solutions.

The question of disarmament is of great importance in terms of the establishment of international peace and security. It can be achieved only by curbing the arms race and, in particular, the race in weapons of mass destruction. We believe that the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) requires more support and ratification by all States to give the Treaty a global character. The State of Qatar reaffirms the need for Israel to join the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency as an initial step towards establishing a Middle East free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We believe that the interests of the stability and security of the region should compel Israel to do this.

The State of Qatar, on the basis of the wise approach of His Royal Highness, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, reaffirms its regional and international commitments and undertakes to work through international and regional organizations to promote international peace and security. We associate ourselves with our brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council and other friendly States in the quest to promote peace and security in the Gulf region, due to its vital importance to the whole world. We are also making tireless efforts to establish friendly and constructive relations with all States of the region, based on good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, respect for legitimacy and the solution of conflicts through dialogue, mediation or international law through the International Court of Justice.

On the basis of this principle, we support the attempt to find such a solution to the dispute between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the islands of Abu Musa and Lesser and Greater Tunb. We have expressed our great satisfaction at the agreement signed between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea in Paris last month regarding the peaceful settlement of the dispute over Greater Hanish through international mediation and arbitration, peacefully and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in a manner that will serve the security and stability of the Red Sea region and promote bilateral relations, good-neighbourliness and common interests between those two countries and bolster international peace and security. At the same time, we would like to express our appreciation to the friendly Government of France for its efforts towards a peaceful settlement of this dispute.

The State of Qatar has expressed its brotherly feelings and sympathy with the people of Iraq, who are living under extremely difficult conditions due to the sanctions imposed on them. On the basis of that, we have welcomed the oil-for-food agreement between Iraq and the United Nations regarding the application of Security Council resolution 986 (1995), since this would mitigate the suffering of the Iraqi people and enable them to meet their need for food and medication. We call upon the United Nations to create the conditions necessary for implementation of that resolution.

We would also like to reaffirm our commitment to the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, and the principle of non-interference in its internal affairs. Yet at the same time, Iraq is required fully to implement all Security Council resolutions, which should stay within the context of international legitimacy and the norms of international law.

We express our great concern at the suffering of the people of Libya due to the sanctions imposed on them.

We associate ourselves in this regard with many other Member States regarding the approach followed in the implementation of the sanctions, and we call for the creation of necessary guarantees for the equitable application of the sanctions so that international interests are safeguarded and the suffering of the people as a result of the sanctions is alleviated.

The State of Qatar has worked to promote the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. We therefore took part in the Arab Summit Conference in Cairo in June 1996, when Arab leaders reaffirmed that the achievement of peace requires full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian territories, including Arab Jerusalem, conditions for the Palestinians to establish an independent State of its own with Jerusalem as its capital, and the full and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon pursuant to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1975) and in accordance with the principle of land for peace accepted by the Arabs and by Israel as a serious basis for peace in the Middle East.

From this rostrum, we would like to call upon the new Israeli Government to continue its efforts to ensure a successful peace process in the Middle East and to take account of United Nations resolutions, especially those that were the background of the Madrid Conference, and the principle of land for peace, in accordance with agreements already reached. We would like the Israeli Government to reconsider its position in order to give momentum to the peace process, to establish conditions conducive to cooperation among the peoples of the region and to achieve a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We call upon the two co-sponsors of the peace process and the international community in its entirety to support the peace process while at the same time providing the necessary economic and political assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority.

The State of Qatar expresses its deep concern at Israel's continued confiscation of Palestinian territories, the establishment of settlements in the occupied Arab territories and the bringing in of settlers in violation of international decisions, the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the provisions adopted at the Madrid Conference.

These settler activities in the Syrian Golan, the occupied Palestinian territories and Arab Jerusalem should cease without delay. We would also like to reiterate our rejection of any attempt to change the demographic character of the Arab city of Jerusalem or its legal status, specifically its geographic and geopolitical status before 4 June 1967. We call upon the international community to guarantee Israel's implementation of binding international resolutions regarding Jerusalem, in particular Security Council resolution 252 (1968), since the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without solving the issue of Arab Jerusalem and the problems of the Palestinian refugees, who should be granted the right to return in accordance with binding international decisions and the resolutions of the United Nations.

Qatar believes that the process of establishing comprehensive and just peace in the region is the only strategic option and that the decision of the Israeli Government to open a tunnel adjacent to Al-Aqsa Al-Sharif is a violation and desecration of sacred Islamic sites and a provocation of Arabs and Muslims all over the world. It runs counter to the peace process, is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and threatens to freeze the peace process and return the region to tension and violence.

From this rostrum, we call upon the co-sponsors of the peace process and the international community to put a speedy end to Israeli actions against the Palestinians in the occupied territories in order to safeguard the rights of the Palestinian people. We furthermore call upon all parties to continue negotiations and implement all the provisions of the agreements reached so far. We look forward to a successful conclusion of the Washington meeting and to tangible measures that would lead to the permanent closing of the tunnel and the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian areas.

The Middle East region and the whole world have suffered greatly from terrorism. We condemn terrorism in all its forms and have always supported international efforts to deal with this phenomenon. We are committed to promoting all initiatives to convene an international conference on this problem. Our participation in the Sharm el-Sheikh Conference was yet another testimony to our interest in this issue. However, we would like to reiterate that resisting occupation and aggression should not be stigmatized as terrorism, since it is done in defence of international rights.

We pay tribute to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who have defended their entity and their honourable ideals of tolerance and justice through more than four years of aggression and genocide. We reiterate our commitment to the unity of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to its sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders. We likewise call upon all parties to completely implement the provisions of the Dayton Agreement and make efforts to bring war criminals to justice.

The State of Qatar welcomes the agreement reached to put an end to the bloodshed in Chechnya, and we hope that the parties concerned will work for the establishment of peace and security in that region.

Developments in the world economy and the new prospects they offer, starting with the signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), require further measures to help fragile economies to develop and to give momentum to the global economy.

It is important therefore to reconsider the issues of the cost of weapons and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, such as preventive diplomacy and the provision of the necessary material and human resources. The costs saved in this manner must be rechannelled to assist developing countries to bolster their economies and raise the living standards of their citizens. Assistance from developed and rich countries should be used to combat poverty and underdevelopment.

The issues of poverty, underdevelopment and deprivation also threaten the environment. The overpopulation of our world has been a constant threat for many years and can only lead to a deterioration of the environment and to the spread of poverty in many countries of the world. Huge resources are squandered on non-essentials that cannot help to bridge the gap between rich and poor countries. The situation is getting more serious every day, and we should all be aware that a solution to these problems requires a reconsideration of the squandering of these resources in ways that do not alleviate human suffering or even meet human needs in poor countries all over the world. Developed countries and international organizations should bear the responsibility in finding the proper solutions to these problems to raise the standard of living of poor peoples. The new world order should not add to suffering and poverty in poor countries.

We reaffirm our confidence in the United Nations and our support for this unique international institution that bears the responsibility of dealing with grave humanitarian, social, economic and political problems and that attempts to find effective solutions to these problems in accordance with the high ideals contained in the Charter for the establishment of a peaceful, secure and prosperous world in which cooperation should prevail.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, His Excellency Mr. Álvaro Ramos.

Mr. Ramos (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Perhaps the term "globalization", which occurs so frequently in so many decisions nowadays, best describes the international system which prevails in the present decade and which, under the influence of a growing and close interdependence, will extend into the twenty-first century. Admittedly, the term is not a precise one that sums up the broad and complex range of supranational phenomena that have been emerging since 1989, the year that symbolizes the end of the cold war.

It is undoubtedly a term that is indicative of the fact that today the cause-and-effect relationship in the economic, political and even the cultural sphere transcends traditional national borders more than ever. Interdependence is today more pronounced than ever before in history: markets, capital flows, research and production do not coincide with the political map. The industrial assembly lines of advanced technology ignore national borders, often making it difficult to determine the origin of a finished product, since its components come from such diverse sources. The political boundaries of States are no longer boundaries of economic production and processes. The network of multinational corporations has expanded to the extent that transactions between their subsidiaries account for one quarter of world trade. In the face of the fluctuation and volatility of international electronic transactions, the central banks of the most developed countries already have difficulty controlling the exchange rates of their currencies or the level of interest rates. The recent establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) is seen as the institutional culmination of this global trend towards liberalization of trade in goods and services and as a force conducive to interdependence.

Accordingly, globalization, despite the various rates at which it operates in different parts of the world — from the slow, deliberate pace at which it proceeds in countries with agrarian economies to the dizzying rapidity of its progress in those possessing advanced technologies — appears to be the distinguishing mark of the post-cold-war era. This phenomenon increasingly lends itself to the dominance of a system of echoes and reflections between nations, of all manner of interrelationships, which in theory should contribute to international stability, since according to classical doctrine, the risks of military confrontation are reduced when nations become more interdependent economically and financially. Nevertheless, recent events have revealed the contrary: new sources of tension and conflict have emerged on the international scene, as well as new unconventional forms of violence and crime that affect world peace and destabilize coexistence within and between democratic societies.

In this setting of globalization and interdependence, the United Nations — with its universal composition, its agglutinative structure that brings together countries at the most varied levels of human development and ethnic or religious composition, its institutional capacity to act as a point of articulation or a sounding board for all concerns or aspirations that extend beyond the local, national or regional level — would be in an ideal position to play a leading and decisive role. In other words, this Organization is the forum that, by the nature and magnitude of its missions, should embody or interpret more faithfully than any other institution these compelling, topical phenomena of globalization and interdependence.

Yet, this distinctive role of the United Nations remains an unrealized vision. It must be asked, then, whether the United Nations, an organic manifestation of the global system that has taken shape in this decade, is capable of effective, systematic action in preventive diplomacy. We would take it one step further and ask what our own national responsibility is, as a democratic State and a founding Member of the United Nations, in strengthening its role in the face of new challenges.

Although this may appear simplistic, it is possible to conceive of war as a consequence of poverty, injustice, overpopulation or poverty. But if these conditions have to be eliminated before peace is feasible, then preventing or restricting hostile tensions becomes a Utopian exercise. For this reason, we believe that there is an urgent need to take an up-to-date, modern look at how the United Nations should react and act in response to the new threats to peace, and at what its capacity should be to respond to the phenomena inherent in the recent or current forms of globalization.

On considering these questions, we shall certainly come up against an unavoidable obstacle: that of the nation in its traditional form and as the basic unit on which the structure of the United Nations was built. This nation no longer exercises a monopoly over international decisions, and consequently is not the exclusive determinant of their legitimacy. To some extent, this phenomenon may be similar to that described as the emergence of the imprecise State, found in a wide variety of non-State political bodies or agents that have an international impact through the intricate network of non-governmental organizations and multinational political movements whose proliferation is another sign of the new interdependence, and which play an increasingly active role in the management of the world system.

Undoubtedly, Governments, as the executives of the political decisions of States, retain their essential powers in matters of diplomacy, security, defence, macroeconomics and currency. Obviously, the United Nations, sustained by the will of Governments, has acted and continues to act as a summarizer or synthesizer of those various wills, without prejudice to the greater or lesser influence of the military or financial powers of its Member States. For this reason, quite naturally, the activity or inactivity of the Organization depends on the concerns or indifference of national Governments, or on the way in which those Governments articulate their consensus or disagreement. But other actors have also taken the international stage, and they are not always a part of the multiplicity of non-governmental organizations. There are also ethnic groups not assimilated into an externally imposed nationality, so-called region-States, with growing links to the world economy and decreasing links to national authorities, as well as religious movements that transcend frontiers and inflame fanaticism which, in some cases, has terrorist effects.

We therefore see a dual and contradictory process: globalization and fragmentation. On the one hand, interdependence has given rise to an increasingly interlinked world in which entities influence each other mutually, and this in theory would be conducive to the strengthening of political units and the formation of mega-States or large regional blocs. On the other hand, and as a consequence of the progressive impact of these new actors on the international scene, fragmentation has also emerged. Since its establishment, the United Nations has seen the number of Member States increase almost fivefold, and at present, approximately one third of these countries has been significantly affected by insurgent or dissident movements or Governments in exile.

For all of these reasons, which are associated with this dialectical process of globalization and fragmentation, with the growing international importance of a heterogeneous collection of new actors and with the emergence of non-conventional threats to peace that cannot be reconciled through traditional mechanisms of collective security, we need to rethink our Organization and to act in consequence.

The restructuring of the United Nations is certainly not a new issue. On its thirtieth, fortieth and fiftieth anniversaries, efforts at revision, or rather at reform, emerged, aimed at achieving greater efficiency in the pursuit of its purposes. Unfortunately, however, the effort currently under way, like its predecessors, does not go to the root of the problem, which lies far deeper than the pursuit of administrative efficiency or the rationalization of functions. If we evaluate the current efforts to restructure the United Nations, we see clearly that in practice virtually all of the reforms being studied have no more than a procedural or formal impact, and do not make a decisive contribution to strengthening the system, or at least its substance, especially if we bear in mind that this Organization exists at a period in history characterized most distinctly by an accelerated pace of change.

Uruguay fully and spontaneously agrees with the widespread aspiration for change. Like the vast majority of States represented here, our country feels a deep-seated, natural inclination in favour of any means or instrument that, at the global or regional level, prompts or compels nations to conduct themselves in accordance with law. For countries such as ours, which are founded on the rule of international law, it is essential to support any effort to guarantee the legal order, the principles of law, and the rule of law in relations among States. This is not simply a rhetorical reaffirmation of our desire for peace or our conviction that international law must prevail.

Uruguay truly takes the principles of the Charter and the purposes of this Organization as its own, from the maintenance of peace and security — reflected in the fact that our country contributes the largest number of troops per capita to international peacekeeping operations — to the recognition of the primacy of international law — reflected in our being the first country to unconditionally accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. Our position with regard to the United Nations is thus consistent with our historical definition of ourselves as a nation, a definition anchored in respect for international commitments and strict compliance with the principles of international law in all areas in which States bear responsibility.

With reference to the agenda for the present session, and without prejudice to the statements the delegation of Uruguay will be making in the various bodies of the Assembly, we believe it appropriate to make a few brief comments on some items of particular interest.

It is clear that the reform of the Security Council has captured the attention of the international community, precisely because of the post-cold-war changes I have mentioned. The potential impact of the Council on the evaluation, prevention or easing of international conflicts, and the effective application of the principle of legal equality among States make it necessary to have greater democratization or transparency in the decision-making process and more equitable geographical distribution in the composition of the Council.

Uruguay has already expressed its support for increasing the number of permanent members on the Council in the light of present-day world realities, but the number of non-permanent members should also be increased, precisely because of the need for greater transparency and greater representativeness. While many proposals for change have been put forward, we should at the very least all agree that the Council's future composition should be designed so that the quest for more representativeness does not adversely affect the Council's operational efficiency.

With regard to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, and despite the various obstacles that continue to hamper the consolidation of a broad and stable peace, it is essential that the international community maintain its support for the peace process initiated in Madrid in 1991. In the same spirit, it should continue to encourage direct talks between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the Arab countries — as is occurring even today in the United States — with a view to achieving mutual recognition and the ultimate objective of a lasting peace throughout the Middle East. We are confident that the talks taking place in Washington will culminate in the success to which we all aspire, and to which they seem to be leading.

In another context, integration processes are indispensable for fair competition in a world of subregional blocks. In this regard, the countries of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) are convinced that our integration process contributes to a true liberalization of trade. MERCOSUR constitutes an integrated, open process that has created economic zones both inside and outside the subregion. Thus, impetus has been given to association with other States of the hemisphere, with other regional blocs and with countries outside the region. But above all, MERCOSUR has generated trade, both inside and outside the organization. MERCOSUR is today a demonstration of open regionalism, which affirms the commitments and, above all, the teachings of the World Trade Organization.

There is no question that free trade has been and remains one of the cornerstones of world economic development, as was repeatedly recognized during the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). For this very reason, we cannot endorse unilateral efforts to effect the extraterritorial application of domestic legislation and as a consequence of which, whether by virtue of their letter or their spirit, a country would be able to extend the applicability of its laws beyond its own national borders, undermining not only the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States but also freedom of trade, which is the very essence of the World Trade Organization, recently established by the international community.

While our hopes for the establishment of representative democracy throughout our continent remain as strong as ever, we continue to oppose the unilateral application of economic, trade or financial measures against a State for political purposes. The usefulness of such measures for the rapid and peaceful transition of a country towards democracy has not yet been demonstrated.

With regard to cooperation for development, we recall that the countries with greater capacities to contribute undertook to allocate at least 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product for that purpose. Yet there has been a significant downward trend in contributions stemming from that commitment in recent years, and this trend cannot be linked to the financial crisis the Organization is experiencing. These are resources intended to fight poverty and underdevelopment and to create more dignified living conditions for our peoples. Nor should we confine cooperation to a vertical, one-way process; rather, we must also view it in terms of South-South cooperation, availing ourselves of our mutual experience to create our own competitive advantages.

A few days ago, Uruguay became one of the first signatories to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Together with other developments, such as the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, this Treaty constitutes a basic instrument for the reaffirmation of the principles of international peace and security.

Still in the field of disarmament, we have repeatedly voiced our opposition to the transfer, stockpiling, export and production of anti-personnel landmines. Accordingly, we shall continue to support keenly all initiatives aimed at eliminating them, as well as at securing the immediate entry into force of the Protocol adopted in Vienna last May. Uruguayan contingents assigned to peacekeeping Missions in Angola, Mozambique and Western Sahara have been among the many victims of these weapons, and it is the moral obligation of humankind to eradicate them.

Finally, we should like to close by referring to one of the clearest and most tangible manifestations of the phenomenon of globalization we have sought to describe: the production, trafficking and consumption of illegal drugs. This is one of the most tragic forms of international organized crime, and its growing seriousness is demonstrated by statistics from the most varied sources. Its transnational nature makes it essential that the principle of shared responsibility should be systematically applied — without exception or unilateralism — to the entire cycle of production, trafficking and consumption. This is a tightly wound chain whose links include all countries without exception.

Please accept, Mr. President, our sincerest congratulations on your election to guide the work of the Assembly and the firmest commitment of the Government of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay to support you in your activities.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana, His Excellency Mr. Clement Rohee.

Mr. Rohee (Guyana): As the United Nations faces the beginning of its second half-century and the dawn of a new millennium, we look to the Organization for the continuing fulfilment of the high purposes of its Charter: the maintenance of international peace and security and the achievement of international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character.

The experience of the past 50 years has shown that these goals are not easily attained. The end of the cold war has not meant an end to conflicts. The world has now entered a new era in which civil strife has replaced super-power rivalry as the main threat to peace and security.

We have yet to find workable solutions to many situations in which conflict continues to prevail. At the same time, the vast majority of mankind remains prey to poverty, hunger and disease. Such inhumane conditions serve as a fertile breeding ground for chronic economic and social degradation.

You, Mr. President, face the enormous task of guiding us through this vast thicket of concerns. We are confident, however, that your well-known diplomatic experience and skills will lead us to new paths in the search for satisfactory solutions. As a son of Malaysia, a country which has long championed the cause of peace and development, you will undoubtedly bring to bear a sense of urgency to the discharge of the many responsibilities with which you will be entrusted.

In so doing, you will build upon the efforts of your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, who spearheaded our thrust to reform and restructure the world Organization in order to make it more responsive to our needs in the post-cold-war era. He is deserving of our gratitude for his labour during the past year.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for providing dynamic leadership to the Secretariat in these challenging times.

The special commemorative meeting held last year to mark our Organization's fiftieth anniversary provided an excellent opportunity not only for reflection on its past achievements, but also on its future direction. There was no dearth of ideas and proposals for strengthening the United Nations in order to help it face the challenges of the twenty-first century. It may be useful for us to look closer at some of those suggestions to determine their feasibility for implementation. It is an exercise in which some of our main Committees, our several working groups and the Secretariat may profitably engage so that the thinking of our Heads of State and Governments does not fall by the wayside, unheeded and forgotten.

My own President, on that historic occasion, presented his concept of a new global human order in which the nations of the world could come together in a creative partnership for progress. This concept of partnership is predicated on the belief that we all now live in an interdependent world, in which, unless we learn to hang together, we will certainly hang separately.

No one nation, no matter how militarily and economically powerful, can hope adequately to address the many complex cross-boundary problems which it now faces. States Members of the United Nations need to come together urgently to see how they can enhance cooperation in the various areas specified by the United Nations Charter.

Among the immediate imperatives would be the creation of a partnership for peace, for, although the world has been mercifully spared another world war since 1945, it has witnessed a number of conflicts, both old and new, which continue to proliferate and to sap our collective strength. The causes of these eruptions are often deep-seated and not easily eradicated. They require careful study and attempts at resolution. Invariably, this will mean that the United Nations will have to go beyond traditional peacemaking and peacekeeping to the increased practice of preventive diplomacy aimed at pacifying potential conflict situations. The experience of past operations, both successes and failures, should be distilled with a view to garnering those lessons which may be of guidance in future cases. In this context, classical approaches to conflict resolution may have to be supplemented by new and imaginative ideas.

Over the past few years, we have together made a laudable effort to enhance the Security Council's capacity to deal with threats to international peace and security. To our credit, we have been somewhat successful in making the Council's operations more transparent to the public eye. We have yet to decide, however, on the major aspects of resolution 48/26 on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Ideas abound on ways and means of achieving these aims. Our challenge is to reconcile these so that a consensus can be reached on reform. My delegation believes that the various proposals now on the table, such as those made by Belize, Italy and Malaysia, need to be further examined to determine both their political acceptability and feasibility. It is possible that, under the right circumstances and with the necessary political will, a reformed and more representative Council will emerge.

A more democratic Security Council will command the respect and enjoy the confidence of United Nations Member States. In time, they may be persuaded to rely less on their own costly defence forces and more on the collective security system provided by the Organization. As specified by the Charter, the various organs and agencies such as the Assembly, the Council itself, the International Court of Justice, the Secretariat and — under Chapter VIII — regional arrangements, can combine to form an effective bulwark against breaches of peace. During the cold war, some of these organs were precluded from performing their several functions. We must now seek to endow them with the machinery needed for their full operation.

At the same time, we need to strengthen the partnership against the proliferation of all lethal weapons, nuclear and conventional alike. Following the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we have the opportunity now to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty which, while admittedly less than satisfactory, nevertheless offers a chance to proscribe the further development of dangerous weapons.

Although considered less worrisome than their nuclear counterparts, conventional weapons are no less destructive of human life and property. With the ending of the East-West arms race, these weapons are being diverted by producer States to developing countries, where they fuel tensions and eventual conflict. These dangerous transfers must be closely monitored and a serious attempt made to convert the arms industry to development purposes. It is time that we see a dividend from our investment in peace.

In eschewing the use of arms, we must seek to promote dialogue, negotiation and development to remove the root causes of all disputes and conflicts. The persistent eruption of violence in the Middle East demonstrates that, unless respect is shown for the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, peace will continue to elude that troubled region. The peace process cannot, therefore, be allowed to die since without it there is little prospect of reconciliation among belligerents. Similarly, in the Korean peninsula and, indeed, in all areas where divisions among peoples exist, we must use our best diplomatic and political efforts to reduce tensions and encourage peaceful reunification.

Our security concerns have widened in the post-cold-war era to other areas, such as the environment and drug-trafficking. As a small State and member of the Commission on Sustainable Development, Guyana looks forward to the review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is due to take place in 1997. That meeting will provide us with an opportunity to assess the progress made towards implementing the commitments assumed both at Rio and Bridgetown.

With regard to our efforts to combat drug-trafficking and abuse, we were pleased to participate in the high-level debate in the Economic and Social Council last June. We urge further international action on the measures agreed upon and also on the early establishment of an international criminal court which, in our view, will serve as an effective deterrent to drug-related crimes and to other violations against humanity.

Having participated in the various summit conferences which have been held on the environment and development, population and development, human settlements, women and children and social development, my Government is also anxious to see these agreements fully implemented. We also look to the upcoming World Food Summit in Rome to build upon these existing commitments. Eliminating hunger and guaranteeing food security to all the world's people are urgent imperatives for the international community.

As a country which has suffered from the deleterious effects of colonialism, Guyana stands in solidarity with all States that now face the formidable challenge of development. We were thus pleased to participate in the recent mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The results of that review gave reasons to hope that the African predicament can be overcome through a much-strengthened cooperation between African countries and the international community. We wish at this time to call on all States to intensify their efforts to support Africa's initiatives to promote its development, for the success or failure of the African Agenda will be the success or failure of us all.

These issues are at the heart of the wider and comprehensive Agenda for Development which we are in the process of elaborating. The endeavour we have made this past year to complete our negotiations on the content of this important document, while significant, points to the inevitable conclusion that we have yet to find the level of political will needed for meaningful agreement. We seem to be stuck in the confrontational mode set during our previous years of dialogue. My delegation is nonetheless of the view that, given the growing interdependence of Member States and the globalization of the world economy and society generally, there are now sufficient elements to form the basis of a global partnership for peace and development.

The terms of this partnership could be drawn up by mutual agreement of the parties, specifying both the obligations and the rights of each side. On the part of the developing countries, there would be acceptance of their primary responsibility for their development as well as the need for good governance. The developed nations, on the other hand, would commit themselves to supporting these endogenous efforts and to assisting in the creation of an international economic environment that would be propitious to success.

Like the Lomé partnership that has existed for some time now between a large group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States and countries of the European Union, such an arrangement would provide a fair degree of predictability in its operations. Developed and developing countries alike would have the assurances of joint performance and common benefit. Eventually, this partnership would form the basis of a new and enlightened world order to which we have all aspired for many years.

My President, Mr. Cheddi Jagan and the Government and people of Guyana are dedicated to the creation of this new global partnership. We were pleased to note that several international conferences — including the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at Midrand, South Africa, and the meeting of the Group of Seven in Lyon, France — have fully subscribed to the concept. We are therefore encouraged to think that the time has come for the establishment of a new global human order that would be based on respect for national sovereignty, participatory democracy, socio-economic equality, people-centred development and the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We know that such an order or partnership — call it what you will — will not be easy to create and will require the adoption of a fundamentally new development paradigm which will bring together all actors, governmental and non-governmental alike, as well as multilateral and regional institutions, to work together for economic and social progress.

At a symposium which was hosted in August 1996 by the Government of Guyana, ample consideration was given to ways and means of promoting this new order. In light of the changed political, economic and social circumstances of the world today, the conference agreed *inter alia*, that, since the enormous debt burden continued to inhibit development, serious consideration should be given to the cancellation of the debt of the least developed countries; a significant reduction in multilateral debt; and a reduction of the remaining debt stock to sustainable levels for the other developing countries, with debt-service payments limited to 10 per cent of exports, provided that 50 per cent of the savings are used for social sector development. There should also be a significant increase in transfers of long-term development finance to developing countries by, first, attaining the existing official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product by mobilizing new and additional sources of finance; secondly, creating a global fund by mobilizing resources using new and innovative measures, such as the Tobin tax and environment-related levies from which Governments in both the North and the South would benefit; and, thirdly, introducing measures to stabilize the international monetary system and financial markets.

In our efforts to promote the concept of the new global human order, we believe that serious consideration should also be given to the establishment of a fair and equitable trading system, including the provision of reliable access to the markets of the North. Such a system should take into account the special needs of small developing States; ensure fair and stable commodity prices; secure a renegotiation of the provisions of the World Trade Organization, especially with respect to trade and environment, intellectual property rights and foreign direct investments; a reduction and relaxation of conditions attached to future financial transfers; a new emphasis on the expansion of production and growth for sustainable development and a safe physical environment in the south; the development of the social sector as a focus of any new programme with emphasis on education, human resources, health and the development needs of women, children and indigenous peoples; and the enhancement of efforts to democratize and strengthen the United Nations and to restructure other multilateral financial institutions to respond more effectively to the challenge of people-centred development.

In this regard, we must quickly resolve the financial crisis in which the Organization finds itself. Member States, particularly the developed countries, must honour their payment obligations so that the funding of all United Nations activities may be placed on a sound and predictable basis.

These are some of the measures which my Government believes need to be taken urgently by the international community in order to promote global peace and security. Admittedly, some, if not all, may seem in the eyes of many to be too bold and far- reaching. Yet, if they are not implemented soon, we run the grave risk of jeopardizing the future of generations to come. We have the moral imperative to act swiftly to prevent the further decline of our peoples and, indeed, of our entire civilization. Let us therefore resolve to make this fifty-first session of the General Assembly a decisive turning point in the life of the Organization and an opportunity for forging a just and enlightened partnership among the peoples of the world.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau and of the Guinean Communities, His Excellency Mr. Fernando Delfim da Silva.

Mr. Da Silva (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation*): I wish to congratulate the President warmly on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly and to reiterate our trust in his qualities and skills, which will help in conducting the work of this session. I assure him that the delegation of Guinea- Bissau is ready and willing to help him.

We would also like to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for the devotion and constructive spirit with which he carried out his duties.

We take this opportunity to underscore our appreciation to and reiterate our confidence in the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose initiative and personal involvement in the reform of the United Nations system have made satisfactory results possible.

Last year, over 185 States met in New York City to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This historic event was an excellent opportunity for the United Nations to evaluate and assess the state of our Organization in a changing world and to cast a glance forward into the future.

Today, as yesterday, a large part of the world's population — which, to date, has experienced neither peace nor security, not to mention social well-being — place their trust in the United Nations, the only institution with a universal mission, capable of promoting international peace and security and developing socio-economic cooperation on a global scale.

The numerous challenges and hopes which the United Nations must respond to today are unprecedented. It is therefore important that we make every effort to restructure and revitalize the Organization, because the United Nations is facing an increasingly complex international situation.

In that connection, we commend the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council for its contribution to overall efforts made on this important and timely question. Guinea-Bissau is of the view that all related proposals of the African Group, and other proposals such as that of Italy, should be given due consideration.

In a world beset by numerous grave conflicts, the United Nations is incontrovertibly, the best forum for achieving the ideals which underpin its irreplaceable role in promoting international peace and security.

However, despite the ongoing efforts of our Organization, peace and stability are still a dream in many parts of the world. Conflicts and fratricidal warfare, and the persistence of various kinds of serious tension among States, have made innocent victims of entire populations, causing loss of human life and provoking massive movements of peoples and refugees. Unfortunately, Africa is the continent most affected by this tragedy. Angola, Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda and Somalia are dramatic examples of Africa's recent history.

My recent visit to Angola — which coincided with my country's presidency of the Security Council — as Special Envoy of the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. João Bernardo Vieira, demonstrated our people's long-standing solidarity with the people of Angola and illustrates our unequivocal will to promote confidence among the parties, which is essential to the success of the peace process.

In that connection, we should like to stress the important role of the United Nations, the Troika and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Blondin Beye, in the establishment of the peace process in Angola. We are convinced that the road we have travelled and the successes achieved to date fully warrant the confidence of the international community and its continued support for the peace process in Angola. Guinea-Bissau hopes that the reasons for the delay of the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol will be overcome.

We deplore the tragedy that is dividing Liberia, a country of our subregion, just as we deplore the ongoing violations of the agreements concluded, which increase the loss of human life and provoke new outbreaks of violence. We are also gravely concerned to note the negative impact of the war in Liberia on the neighbouring countries.

We urge all warring factions to respect the new implementation plan of the Abuja Agreement and of the Liberian National Transitional Government. We also invite them to cooperate fully with the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia and the rest of the international community in the search for a definitive solution to the problem in Liberia.

The situation in the Great Lakes region, particularly the situation prevailing in Burundi, is also of great concern to us. We support the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to avoid a repetition of the Rwandan tragedy in these countries.

As for Western Sahara, we reiterate our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to organize the referendum.

Guinea-Bissau continues to focus special attention on the situation in East Timor which needs a negotiated, peaceful, political approach if a solution is to be found. In this context, we would like to welcome the talks between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the United Nations to find a just solution to this conflict.

On behalf of our Government, I reiterate our firm conviction that the Republic of China on Taiwan should be part of the United Nations on the basis of respect for the principle of universality and for the legal equality of States.

The fundamental rights of 21 million inhabitants of a territory under the jurisdiction of a legal Government whose President has been democratically elected provide the political and legal basis for the recognition of their right to international status as a sovereign State under the legal and judicial terms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The reunification of China is a question that must be resolved by the people of China itself. However, the Republic of China on Taiwan is legally entitled to enjoy international status before reunification — in other words, its recognition as a State and application of the principle of parallel representation of divided States.

It is essential that the Middle East peace process be supported. We consider that any lasting solution to the Middle East conflict must respect the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State, and must respect the independence and territorial integrity of all States of the region, including the State of Israel, and their right to live in security within internationally recognized boundaries. The tragic events of recent days have weakened the peace process while seriously affecting world public opinion. We urge the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to persevere on the path of dialogue towards the restoration of a climate of trust, which is vital for the establishment of lasting peace. We welcome the meeting between President Arafat and Prime Minister Netanyahu, which is an important step on that path. We commend all parties that are contributing to the restoration of the Israel-Palestinian dialogue, especially the Government of the United States of America.

The holding of elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a positive element in the resolution of this crisis in Europe. We hope that all the parties concerned will henceforth devote all their energies to the reconstruction of that devastated country, to ensure a future of peace, tolerance and development.

The embargo against Cuba, whose repercussions gravely affect the people of that country, must be resolved through dialogue and negotiation by the parties concerned, with a view to achieving a complete and satisfactory solution.

Poverty, malnutrition, hunger and major endemic diseases are a painful reality that affects a large part of the population of developing countries. We welcome the convening at Rome next November of the World Food Summit, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Guinea-Bissau is convinced that international security and stability depend on the collective struggle against all the internal and external factors that force a large part of the world's population to live in abject poverty. Indeed, the persistence of poverty throughout the world requires an ongoing sustained effort on the part of the community of nations and calls for a global approach to resolve the major socio-economic problems affecting the world.

The debt burden and debt-servicing gravely jeopardize development in Africa. During recent years, as was clearly demonstrated by the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, our countries have become net exporters of capital because of the financial agreements they must honour. Indeed, the amounts allocated to debt-servicing greatly exceed external resource flows. Guinea-

Bissau is no exception. Overall, third world economies have seen little improvement.

The gap between developed and developing countries continues to grow because of the slow rate of economic growth in the developing countries in general and the least-developed countries in particular.We welcome the action undertaken by the United Nations, especially the System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. My Government continues to devote considerable efforts to the economic recovery of our country, strictly applying the structural adjustment programme agreed with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. However, efforts to restore our country's macroeconomic balance and the well-being of our people should be supplemented by additional support from the international community, which we hope will continue to be forthcoming in support of our efforts in that direction.

Guinea-Bissau, an African country and a member of the Portuguese-speaking community, welcomes Portugal's initiative to propose to its European Union partners the convening of a European-African summit, whose objective would be to promote a political dialogue aimed at laying a new foundation for a new global partnership.

Environmental protection and the rational utilization of our planet's natural resources are the responsibility of all humanity. Aware of this reality, Guinea-Bissau has designed with its cooperation partners a strategy for sustainable development that respects environmental balance and which can be considered socially viable and just. In that context, our Government is making considerable efforts to implement the recommendations of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, the Platform of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing, and the recommendations of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Istanbul.

Respect for and the full exercise of basic human rights are elements of freedom, peace and international stability. Guinea-Bissau, a democratic country, is resolved to preserve intrinsic human values, for harmonious and integrated development. The United Nations is intended to be the appropriate forum for finding concerted comprehensive solutions to the major challenges facing the world today. That is why it is vital to increase its ability to prevent conflicts and preserve peace and to promote socio-economic development. Today Guinea-Bissau, more than ever before, is determined to contribute to the achievement of the ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Miguel Angel Burelli Rivas.

Mr. Burelli Rivas (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like first of all to congratulate Ambassador Razali on his election to the presidency of the Assembly and to wish him every success in his work.

It would seem that after half a century, the debate on the meaning, importance, role and timeliness of this Organization has become increasingly impassioned. It could be said that the United Nations is on trial.

It may be that some of the criticism is justified. It is accused, for instance, of having a large bureaucracy, and it is said that there is a proliferation of situations requiring the deployment of military forces to pave the path for peace, which is also a path riddled with war. These situations came about without the consent of the Member States, who must all bear their share of the costs. This enlarged bureaucracy, added to the expenses of military peacekeeping, increases the financial burden of the weaker countries. Yet, it seems to be the strong countries that most resent and denounce this burden.

Nevertheless, to thoroughly assess and evaluate what the United Nations is and what it represents, we would have to compare it to another such organization of its kind, one that had brought together nearly 200 sovereign States, led them by the hand through 50 of the most enigmatic and dangerous years of history and remained a point of reference when all the ideological references had collapsed. And that other organization has never existed.

As far as we know, humanity has never lived through 50 continuous years of peace, yet 51 years have passed without a tremor of generalized conflict like the ones that once seemed to be cyclical. Even though misunderstandings and aggressions appear on one continent or another, based on deep-seated racial, religious or political hatred, and leading to genocide or local wars, we cannot speak of a conflagration, especially when the will of the people of all regions rises above these wars, committed to the restoration of peace.

The international community, in varying degrees, has started to review its greatest Organization, and it has focused its attention first on the Security Council. Fortunately, the creative imagination of States has suggested various ways to change it in order to make it more representative of the new world realities and, of course, to make it more efficient. My country follows this process with enormous interest, aware that the Security Council will be the centre of balance of the world system.

In the meantime, this long period of relative peace has allowed for the rise of European integration, which is perhaps the greatest political achievement of our century. It has made possible the growth of daring and vigorous technological civilizations in Asian countries as well as understanding and growth in the Latin American region, which today has become, thanks to this understanding, humankind's most promising abode. In this framework, Venezuela has broadened its ties with and deepened its commitments to the great causes of our time, such as the enforcement of human rights, truly representative democracy, integration as an economic and political culture of our modern era and disarmament as a guarantee of world security. Tomorrow, on behalf of my country I shall proudly sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

My country hopes that the criticism levelled at the Organization will justify itself by leading to logical plans to reform and revitalize it. Its success must be definitively established in the implementation of human rights, in the fight against terrorism and in the alliance to exterminate drug trafficking and connected activities. A special session of the General Assembly has been called on this latter topic at Mexico's urging.

In his current report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General refers to the territorial controversy between Venezuela and Guyana. I must note that this controversy lies within the framework of the 1966 Geneva agreement signed by both countries in order to reach a practical and lasting solution to this dispute. In a spirit of dialogue and cooperation between the two parties, we appealed to the Secretary-General's good offices and are now applying one of the mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes provided for in the United Nations Charter. We are therefore surprised that this case is expressly mentioned in the chapter on conflict situations.

As a Latin American, I must recognize that, thanks to this lasting peace, my region, a scion of Europe, and its creature in many respects, has resumed friendly relations with its natural metropolis after 80 years of world wars that had separated us and created a rift in the cultural patterns that had governed us for centuries.

Of course, numerous threats linger on. The so-called weapon-States that have the financial resources to spark a regional conflict that can multiply and spread are still there, untouched by democratic norms and mostly driven by fanaticism. In countries where no one would have imagined it, the danger of racial discrimination returns like a nightmare. At the very centre of the most cultured continent, we have witnessed a war and a genocide that we would angrily condemn in Cambodia or in Rwanda, and among countries that have been an world example of tolerance and coexistence for centuries. The followers of two religions that are virtually the same confront and exterminate one another almost daily.

At the same time, the conditions of exchanges, the goals of good policies and the miracle of modern communications lead to a free flow of trade, technology, scientific models and human movement, both through tourism and through commercial interests. All this is bringing humanity together as a whole, using information to express an impassioned interest that is beginning to be widely known as globalization.

The Organization still has to overcome the prophecies and schemes of pessimistic traditions, according to which natural law dictates the existence of wars, diseases and other disasters as a fateful necessity to regulate population growth and as an incentive to devise technologies and scientific developments in the escalation that Malthusians see in their observation of nature.

Peace is the primary purpose of the United Nations; war is the recourse most commonly used by humanity to try to solve imbalances and resentments. And we have peace, ceaselessly troubled but always re-established as far as and wherever possible. But we must remember that war is the most chronic of recidivists, since greed and ambition feed on it.

We might say that what this Organization needs to solve universal strife, poverty and untrammelled population growth is a human resource development and systematic education project to do away with the fragile ethics of our time and to teach all nations the art of living — and living together. Fears, suspicions and animosities are engendered by ignorance among people and nations.

I speak on behalf of a country whose most important natural resource has endowed it with power and economic euphoria on the one hand, and plunged it into acute psychological depression on the other. That resource is oil, of which we hold the largest and most secure reserves in the Western world. Since oil legally belongs to the State, as do all underground resources, the State finds it, processes it, sells it and distributes its revenues as services. Little by little, the old agricultural country became used to stretching out a hand to receive from the State gifts of protectionism, subsidies, scholarships, credits and even undue largesse, all of which used to come from the land as a reward for labour.

For more than two generations Venezuelans relied exclusively on oil, disregarding personal effort. At times, the State demagogically encouraged this dependency and promoted idleness, thus leading to ethical complications born of collusion between politics and the economy. This is the deep-seated reason for the so-called Venezuelan crisis. It is different from others because it is not economic but moral, and can only be solved by a return to honest behaviour and personal endeavour, which requires a great deal of time and effort.

This is what the Administration of President Rafael Caldera is striving for. After trying to reverse the enormous evils he inherited, using measures that were not too harmful economically for the weakest sector, on 15 April, he decided to open up the economy and incorporate prevailing market economy values through the Venezuelan Agenda. He was careful, however, to establish a programme to absorb the enormous shock this opening causes transitionally on the majorities accustomed to the old State paternalism. After a brief period, we are emerging from this unique crisis, which cannot be and could not have been resolved by a simple decree, as other crises, since it required and still requires a change in habits in order for people to learn to be self-sufficient. The case of Venezuela could recur in other countries characterized by State paternalism.

If we look closely at the so-called social crisis that all Latin American countries suffer, we can see it is due to a lack of training. We used to say that education was the universal solution to all problems, and it is. But at a time when Latin American society has become unhinged because of peasant migrations undoing the social and moral order, with the ensuing marginalization brought about by a change in customs leading to the degradation of the family, both education and training are absolute necessities.

The breakdown of the traditional home deprives people of the essential ethical values that used to be learned from the mother. Nowadays, the State must replace the home and the mother, in preparing the inner self of its citizens. It is evident, therefore, that training and education are of primary importance since the human being's inner self must be strengthened in order to rebuild the family unit, which gives coherence, pride and courage to a society. Simón Bolívar, the Liberator of America, grasped the whole problem when he said, "Morality and enlightenment are our first necessities". Perhaps the whole world today suffers the same evil and has the same needs.

The United Nations, through its specialized agencies, is carrying out innumerable programmes, studies, trials and experiments to solve the daily tragedy of our human species. This is becoming more and more complex since the efforts are aimed at an already deformed being, incapable, therefore, of living in harmony with others.

If we were to agree that the chain connecting home, primary school, secondary school, university, and life broke down some time ago, and that it is missing its first link, without which all else is pointless and without foundation, we would invest at the very roots of human life the economic and scientific resources needed to form human beings from the start, enabling them to grow, endowed with the values that would make them citizens.

Latin America, born unaware of racial hatred, religious conflicts and territorial greed, with an indivisible spirit made up of a combination of influences that move in the same direction on the freest and broadest of stages, is hurt by the fact that its real problems today are social ones, brought on by the error of political regimes that ignored the discipline of education or doubted its undeniable primacy.

Democracy has taken root in Latin America as in no other part of the universe as a consequence of political desire. Nevertheless, we are not satisfied, because democracy must mean the eradication of age-old ills and constitute, more than merely a system to elect governments, a cogent civilization.

We aspire to a democracy transparent in its conduct and effective in its achievements to continue offering it as an alternative to the ancient dictatorships. This explains my country's perseverance in attaining an honest and clean democracy. In this regard, we have proposed a convention against corruption, which has been approved at the hemispheric level. Strangely enough, it would be the first of its kind in the world, which goes to show how strongly entrenched this vice is: it has gone unpunished by dictatorships and democracies alike throughout time and around the world.

The day is not distant when this instrument, limited now to our hemisphere, will encompass our whole

Organization, since the crime it prosecutes is not exclusively American but takes root in many countries on all continents. During the last substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, Venezuela, together with Argentina, the United States and other countries, sponsored a United Nations declaration on corruption and bribery in transnational commercial activities, which is clear proof that the fight against unpunished corruption prospers in the world.

If the United Nations, aware that the key to universal change lies in training and education, were to inspire and lead an in-depth study of what makes a human being, of the way societies that break into conflict or serve as models for others are defined by the sum of their members; if the United Nations were to use the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to add a universal teaching component to all its cooperation programmes, then the true ethical and human redemption of society would begin.

Free of prejudice and with sufficient resources, Latin America, a melting pot of customs and races, could serve as a laboratory to show how the human species can straighten its spine of ethics, which has been so twisted in so many places. Our America as a whole is a welcoming place for peace, since there are no elements of unease or insecurity other than social asymmetries — not the asymmetries of blood-lines, but those of dire poverty, born of the incapacity to transform and distribute our plentiful natural resources.

We are living a unique moment in history. In a short time, without violence, we have seen great empires come to an end, the elimination of the cruellest jails of human thought, the liberation of all wills and the opening of the greatest opportunity peoples have ever had to reorganize themselves in accordance with hopes and desires that were long repressed or thwarted by violence of all sorts.

As Marguerite Yourcenar says in her biography of Hadrian, referring to the religious perplexity of the great Emperor: in his lifetime the old gods no longer existed and Christ had not yet arrived. Humanity's present spirit seems to be similar: free, but still dazed and hesitant to adopt a new order from a new mould; but, above all, free, although at this fateful moment great leaders might be lacking.

The United Nations holds and reflects this feeling — hovering between jubilation and disbelief — like a prodigy standing before the panorama of infinite possibilities of what we can create with the fertile dreams of our era.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Koffi Panou, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Togolese Republic.

Mr. Panou (Togo) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, I would like to express to the President my sincere and warm congratulations upon his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. My delegation is convinced that his skills, his perfect mastery of international issues and his unstinting efforts will bring the work of our session to a satisfactory conclusion. In the same context, I would like to assure him of my delegation's readiness to cooperate with him in the discharge of his lofty mission.

It is also a pleasure for me to commend the remarkable work done by his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, who stamped the fiftieth session with the seal of his effectiveness and dedication. I pay tribute to him on behalf of my delegation.

I would also like to congratulate Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for the noteworthy way in which he has devoted his energies to the achievement of the objectives of our Organization and to enhancing day by day its credibility. He has all the respect of the Togolese delegation.

The economic, political and social context of this session hardly seems to differ from that of previous years: the ongoing conflicts continue to take many victims. Moreover, terrorism continues to have a great impact on the world, and the burden of debt, with all its implications, holds in check the development of many countries, particularly those of Africa. All these phenomena cast a shadow over the international landscape and prompt concerns regarding the genuine advent of peace, security and prosperity, to which all of humanity legitimately aspires.

It is in this context that Togo has endeavoured to consolidate the basis of a state of law and to confront the imperatives of sustainable human development to ensure the social well-being of its people.

Togo has begun the process of democratizing national political life, and the process has had a normal and encouraging development, particularly in the last three years. The calm, orderly and transparent holding of partial legislative elections on 4 and 18 August 1996 illustrates the resolve of the Togolese people, with the impetus of the Head of State, Mr. Gnassingbe Eyadema, to move forward along the road to democracy, peace and political stability, which guarantee social and economic development.

Having learned the lessons of a difficult democratic transition, which ripped the social fabric and cast into doubt the achievements of its development process, the population of Togo is more aware than ever before of the need to preserve and strengthen its unity. By doing so it will be able to effectively meet present and future challenges, ensure its prosperity and make its modest contribution to the building of a better world. The President of the Republic and the Government of Togo intend to continue to work tirelessly in this direction, in concert with other members of the international community. They are satisfied to note today that the people of Togo, through the hardships that they have endured, have acquired a clear awareness of self-responsibility. Thus, having supported the efforts of their leaders for several months, they more and more firmly reject political formulas and organization approaches designed in other climes that have proved unsuitable in the context of their history and culture. In the view of many observers, the Togolese people, through the countless manifestations of its political will, is cultivating the authentic African democracy that we all desire.

Last year the United Nations commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of its founding. On that occasion, the General Assembly observed in its Declaration:

> "The determination, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war' is as vital today as it was fifty years ago." *(resolution 50/6, first para.)*

The many ethnic or religious armed conflicts that still scar the international landscape confirm this view of the General Assembly and demonstrate the magnitude of the task still facing the Organization.

Africa remains one of the world's regions of tension, and our continent has been sorely tested by cruel conflicts persisting in a number of States. The Government of Togo deplores the fact that conflicts such as those in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Burundi and Angola have not yet been definitively resolved. The huge numbers of victims, refugees, displaced persons and the massive destruction caused by these conflicts should be enough to convince the parties concerned of the need to put an end to their disputes, which could tire the patience and perseverance of the international community in its efforts.

Concerned over the deteriorating situation in these countries, the Togolese Government urges the various actors to seek a peaceful solution to their disputes, through dialogue and cooperation, so that their peoples can at last find the peace and stability necessary for their development.

With respect more specifically to Liberia, my delegation welcomes the bold measures taken by the Committee of Nine of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at its meeting in Abuja last August, aimed at successfully concluding the peace process begun many years ago. These measures, accompanied by sanctions, attest to the determination of the ECOWAS countries to do their utmost to find a definitive and lasting solution to this fratricidal and seemingly endless conflict.

At this new stage of the process, it is important for our Liberian brothers to recognize the tremendous efforts made by the ECOWAS States, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations, and to show good will in order to facilitate the effective implementation of the Abuja Agreement of 19 August 1995, which provides the means to end this conflict and to return to peace and to constitutional normalcy.

With respect to the dispute over the Bakassi peninsula, my country would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General's efforts towards a peaceful settlement. These efforts, which recently took the form of the dispatch of a good-offices mission to Cameroon, Nigeria, Bakassi and Togo, may help strengthen the interim measures aimed at reducing tensions, while waiting for a judgement to be handed down by the International Court of Justice.

Togo is determined to work towards resolving all conflicts by peaceful means and to safeguard peace and security on the African continent. Thus my country and its President are prepared to contribute to the restoration of peace on the peninsula and to the normalization of relations between the two countries. In the same spirit, the Government of Togo hopes that the good will shown by the two parties during the visit of the Secretary-General's good-offices mission will continue to prevail, so that the desired goal may be achieved as soon as possible.

The persistence of these conflicts, which deeply undermine our continent's development efforts, compels me to recall the proposal made at the thirtieth session of the OAU conference of Heads of State and Government by President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo aimed at establishing an inter-African force charged with keeping the peace wherever it is threatened or breached.

We welcome the various initiatives undertaken to that end to make this idea a reality, so that Africa, with the support of the international community, might better manage conflict situations, which divert the efforts of the African peoples from the priorities of economic and social development.

Along the same lines, given the numerous conflicts the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution will have to face and in light of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, it is important to strengthen the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, headquartered in Togo. To that end, it would be appropriate if the Centre, established pursuant to resolution 40/151 G of 16 December 1985 by the General Assembly at the request of OAU Heads of State and Government, could benefit from adequate and appropriate resources so that it could fully discharge its duties. In that context, I should like to reaffirm that the Government of Togo, which attaches great importance to this Centre, will do its utmost to honour its commitments as the host country.

The 1991 Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East and the Washington agreements of 13 September 1993, *inter alia,* have sparked hopes regarding a negotiated settlement of the question of Palestine and the conflict in the Middle East as a whole. The evacuation of certain occupied territories of Palestine, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the repeal of anti-Israel provisions from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) charter, and the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, are positive occurrences that bear witness to the progress achieved in the context of the Middle East peace process. Togo welcomes this progress.

However, the difficulties that have confronted this process in the last few days, jeopardizing its normal development, are a source of grave concern for my delegation. The delegation of Togo is particularly concerned at the tragic events that took place last week in Jerusalem, which claimed many Palestinian and Israeli victims.

Togo, which endorses Security Council resolution 1073 (1996), adopted on 28 September 1996, calls for greater energy in the continuation of the process until it achieves concrete results. It urges the evacuation of all occupied Arab territories, the existence of Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. At any rate, it is important to achieve a just and comprehensive peace benefiting all countries of the region, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

With respect to the war in the former Yugoslavia, I should like on behalf of the Togolese Government to heartily congratulate the architects of the Dayton Agreement, signed in Paris on 14 December 1995, and to express our appreciation at the acceptable development of the situation in the light of the implementation of that Agreement. We would like to encourage the main actors in that conflict to continue to seek a negotiated settlement aimed at a definitive return to peace and stability in that part of Europe.

Aside from hotbeds of tension, we must note that terrorism, which we condemn, is, because of its pernicious objectives and criminal acts, one of the gravest threats today to international peace and security. We welcome the holding of the Summit for Peacemakers in Sharm el-Sheikh and the recent meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 7 major industrialized countries and of the Russian Federation in Paris. The Government of Togo welcomes the various measures advocated at these two meetings in order to energetically thwart the activities of transnational criminal organizations and their agents.

With respect to the safeguarding of peace through disarmament, Togo reiterates its firm commitment to general and complete disarmament, and supports unreservedly the efforts of the international community to achieve that objective. In this connection, my delegation considers that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), opened for signature by States on 24 September 1996, and which I have just signed on behalf of the Government of Togo, will undoubtedly contribute, if it is accepted and applied by all, to a reduction of the nuclear threat. This would allow the international community to make headway towards the definitive elimination of nuclear weapons, which is one of the most ardent wishes of humanity.

As the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations states:

> "A dynamic, vigorous, free and equitable international economic environment is essential to the well-being of humankind and to

> international peace, security and stability." *(resolution 50/6, para. 2)*

This unanimous recognition of the positive effects that a sound international economic climate can have on world stability is absolutely accurate. The growing indifference of a large part of the international community to the search for appropriate solutions to the current economic crisis is becoming increasingly disturbing. Indeed, while in the industrialized countries the overall socio-economic situation is experiencing positive developments and while the disparities in their economic performances are decreasing, we note with regret that the developing countries, particularly in those of Africa, still languish under the debt burden and have great difficulty in extricating themselves from the situation they have been in for several years.

As has been repeatedly pointed out, the solution to the economic problems of the developing countries requires radical and innovative solutions, *inter alia*, the cancellation or appreciable reduction of their debts and the implementation of bold measures aimed at promoting their progress.

My delegation welcomes the efforts made so far by creditors to resolve the debt problem. It appreciates the resolve expressed by the seven major industrialized countries at the G-7 Lyons Summit to take additional action to reduce the debt burden of the poorest countries *vis-à-vis* multilateral institutions and bilateral creditors that are not members of the Paris Club. It welcomes in particular the recent decision of the Ministers for Finance of the seven major industrialized countries, at their meeting in Washington, to alleviate the debt burden of the poorest countries, up to a limit of 80 per cent.

Aside from the question of debt, my delegation is also concerned with other problems of development. Aware that they are primarily responsible for promoting their own development through sound and consistent economic and social policies, the developing countries involved in structural adjustment programmes have made enormous sacrifices, which, unfortunately, have not yet achieved the desired results. Thus most of these countries face serious social problems, including endemic disease, hunger, unemployment, a high number of unemployed graduates, strident claims by its citizens and poverty.

To confront and resolve these various ills in a lasting manner, the international community must show greater solidarity and mobilize, together with these countries, to render them the necessary assistance. Moreover, in order for it to take off economically, Africa must stop being viewed as just a reservoir of raw materials.

At this time of globalization of the economy and the liberalization of markets, it is imperative that African States become competitive in international trade. To this end, they must meet the challenges of industrial development through sustained technical and financial cooperation with the industrialized countries. Moreover, it is important that Africa not become dependent on the exploitation of raw materials, whose prices are constantly deteriorating. The pace of its industrialization must be encouraged to accelerate through international cooperation based on partnership and the support of developed countries, development-related bodies and the relevant multilateral financial institutions.

In that connection, the Government of Togo, which created and continues to strengthen conditions that favour foreign investment in its free zone, *inter alia*, would like to express its gratitude to both its public and private partners and to the industrial development institutions that, through their investments and various forms of assistance, have supported its initiatives in this domain.

The World Food Summit will be held in Rome next November. The Government of Togo hopes that the work of the Summit will meet with success and that the recommendations that will be adopted there will help to improve the food and agricultural situation so that the needs of peoples in this sphere can be met.

Togo welcomes the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, launched on 15 March 1996 by the Secretary-General. We see in this initiative a confirmation of the commitment of the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to give concrete reality to the objectives of the San Francisco Charter in order, *inter alia*, to support development in Africa.

At a time when the economic and social situation of Africa is constantly deteriorating, it is important to duly appreciate this Special Initiative promoting a partnership between political and economic institutions and African Governments. One of the Initiative's good points is that it deals substantively with problems and focuses primarily on action towards peace, political stability and development on the continent. However, in order for it to achieve its objectives, the international community must become effectively involved in its implementation by making a decisive contribution to the mobilization of the necessary financial resources, so that it does not become simply just another initiative for Africa. My Government will devote the necessary attention to it in order to turn the situation to best account.

In today's world, where nations are confronted with the paradox of fragmentation and globalization, the United Nations, more than ever before, has a key role to play. Thus, in connection with the severe lack of resources that has brought the United Nations to the brink of bankruptcy, my Government is among those which believes that no reform of the Organization can succeed if the Organization has to fight for its own survival. It is therefore urgent that drastic measures be taken to ensure a stable financial base for the Organization and to put a definitive end to this payments crisis, which has paralysed it. The principal States in arrears should show the political will to help resolve the crisis.

In the view of my delegation, improved effectiveness of the United Nations is a must; but it is also important to promote its democratization. We believe, therefore, that the Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council is proceeding in the right direction. Given the present configuration of the United Nations, and as noted by the Working Group, it is necessary to contemplate an equitable and responsible increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council and to strengthen its links with the main organs of the United Nations and with the Member States, so as to enhance transparency.

For many decades, thanks to the sustained efforts of the United Nations, multilateralism has clearly been the most appropriate framework for resolving problems relating to international peace and security and to development.

The balance sheet drawn up last year, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, was encouraging despite certain shortcomings. Nevertheless, much remains to be done. Greater efforts are required on the part of Member States, as well as greater resources, so that a reformed and revitalized United Nations, better adapted to current realities, can respond effectively to the expectations of humanity as a whole.

In the discharge of the lofty mission assigned to the Organization, Togo, for its part, will associate itself without reservation to any initiative aimed at safeguarding international peace and security and promoting justice, human rights and progress for the benefit of all nations.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf.

Mr. Al-Sahaf (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to begin my statement by congratulating Mr. Razali Ismail on his election to the office of President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

I am quite confident that his extensive experience and competence will definitely contribute to the successful outcome of this session. I should like to assure him that we are keen to cooperate with him and support his efforts to bring the proceedings of this session of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion.

In recent weeks, Iraq has been the focus of worldwide attention and interest because of the American missile attacks to which it has been subjected and the intensive American military build-up that followed in preparation for a large-scale military aggression on the pretext that Iraq violated Security Council resolutions.

I would like here to describe our views on these events. Iraq has acted in no way contrary to the Charter or Security Council resolutions or to justify an American military aggression against it. What Iraq did was to move its forces on its own territories and within its internationally recognized borders at the request of one of the main Iraqi Kurdish factions in order to repel a military aggression committed by another faction in alliance with a neighbouring foreign country. This action of the Iraqi Government falls within the sovereignty of Iraq over its own territories and in the context of its duty to defend its own people and repel any foreign aggression against them. This is a right guaranteed by all international covenants and laws. It is also a basic responsibility of the Government of any country.

The operation was limited, swift and carried out without the loss of human lives. This has been attested to by all observers, including officials of United Nations agencies who were working in northern Iraq. This operation put an end to the state of civil war, in-fighting, chaos and insecurity in northern Iraq and restored peace and stability to that region. The United States, however, tried to exploit these developments and to use them as a pretext to carry out missile attacks against Iraq and destroy a number of civilian installations, leaving many martyrs and wounded civilians in its wake.

The United States Administration was not satisfied with its military aggression against Iraq. The United States President openly announced, on 3 September 1996, his decision to expand the no-fly zone in southern Iraq, which had been imposed by the United States in 1992, from the 32nd parallel to the 33rd parallel. The imposition of no-fly zones in Iraqi airspace is a use of armed force in violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. It was a unilateral decision that had nothing to do with the United Nations nor with Security Council resolutions on Iraq. This fact was confirmed by the official spokesman of the United Nations on 7 January 1993, when he said that the imposition of the no-fly zone in southern Iraq was not based on any Security Council resolution.

The spokesman of the French Foreign Ministry announced on 2 September 1996 that:

> "There is no United Nations or the Security Council provision defining the basis for a no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel or south of the 32nd parallel. The decision to establish these zones is a quadrilateral decision by France, the United States, Britain and Turkey. There is no provision by the United Nations defining these zones."

As the Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations pointed out on 5 September 1996:

> "This no-fly zone, from its inception, was not based on any international legal foundation."

The Arab and world reaction to the aggressive actions of the United States has been one of rejection and condemnation. The whole world now knows that the imposition of the no-fly zones in Iraq is neither legitimate nor legal and constitutes an ongoing aggression against Iraq. It must cease.

From the beginning, Iraq has been very clear in rejecting the so-called no-fly zones unilaterally imposed by America and some of its allies. America and Britain insisted on expanding this no-fly zone and claimed that its aim, as declared by the highest officials in the United States Administration, was to protect United States strategic interests in the region. I wonder: Is a State entitled forcibly to impose such a situation on another independent State, also a United Nations Member, on the pretext of protecting its strategic interests? Such acts would cause the law of the jungle to prevail in international relations over the law of the Charter.

We demand that the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council reject this logic — which is based neither on international legitimacy nor on the authorization of the Security Council itself — and relieve our country of this injustice. None of the allegations and pretexts put forward by the United States to justify its attacks and military build-up against Iraq have any justification in law, fact or legitimacy. They should be deplored and condemned.

I would like here to express the gratitude of the people of Iraq for the Arab and world reaction to this aggression and the acts that followed, which were aimed at violating Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

No one here is unaware of the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the total blockade imposed on them, which has prevented them from satisfying their basic human needs for more than six years. Conditions in Iraq have reached such an extreme that it has become impossible for the United Nations to maintain the silence imposed on it by one party's will, especially when humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies have loudly warned of the serious consequences and harm of continuing the total blockade of Iraq. Infant mortality rates have soared for lack of food and medicine. Disease is rampant. The health, education and environmental sectors have deteriorated. There have also been major effects and regression in other humanitarian fields, in the growth and development of which Iraq had been a pioneer among third-world countries.

However, the United States of America, which has been shedding crocodile tears over the humanitarian conditions of the Iraqi people and their need for food and medicine, stands today publicly and blatantly against the legal, balanced and proper implementation of the memorandum of understanding on the "oil for food" formula arrived at by Iraq and the United Nations Secretariat on 20 May 1995.

While the professional and diplomatic dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations Secretariat managed to reach agreements satisfactory to both sides, the United States tried to put all kinds of hurdles in the way of the negotiations at each phase, with a view to delaying the finalization of the memorandum of understanding. Then it started to set up road blocks, hindering the actual implementation of the memorandum's provisions in the framework of the sanctions committees and in the completion of the administrative arrangements needed for such implementation.

I would like here to provide some statistics to demonstrate the magnitude of the obstacles the United States threw up to the process of drafting the memorandum of understanding. It is well known that it took 50 working meetings to complete the memorandum — 50 working meetings — from 6 February to 20 May 1996. In the course of this process, the United States presented 29 amendments to the provisions of the memorandum agreed upon with the United Nations Secretariat during the negotiations. Although Security Council resolution 986 (1995) provides for accelerated procedures to implement agreements, it took 80 days to establish the said procedures. During this period, 28 informal meetings were held with experts from the French and German missions; there were five formal meetings, at which the procedures were supposed to have been quickly completed and adopted. The United States, however, delayed that adoption for three more weeks. The United States remains to this day the only party blocking the implementation of the memorandum of understanding, and it does so for political reasons that completely contradict its own allegations that the purpose of resolution 986 (1995) is purely humanitarian.

Because of United States pressure and interference, the Secretary-General has so far been unable to implement the memorandum of understanding. This is evidenced by the fact that discussion on the implementation of a six-month plan to provide food and medicine to the Iraqi people has taken seven months. It is not yet complete because of continuous United States interference and derailing of the process to implement this memorandum. We believe that these acts should cease and that the United Nations Secretariat and Iraq should be allowed to implement the memorandum as soon as possible and without further interference.

The Iraqi people want to be able to satisfy their own needs, using their own capabilities and financial means. They seek the lifting of restrictions whose sole aim is to starve them and wound their honour and pride. However, like the people of Iraq, a proud people more than 6,000 years old that has given birth to human civilizations, will not kneel before any threat nor surrender its sovereignty and pride to those whose only aim is hegemony over the wealth of peoples and things sacred to them. Iraq is only demanding its right — guaranteed by all international covenants and customs and Security Council resolutions — since all the obligations imposed on Iraq have been carried out and all the reasons for the imposition of these unjust sanctions have been removed.

Iraq has fulfilled all its obligations under Security Council resolutions in spite of the injustice they involved. While these same resolutions place corresponding obligations on the Security Council, we have seen no movement by the Council to meet them. We feel, rather, that the Council has abdicated its powers of control and monitoring of the implementation of its resolutions. It assigned that task to the Special Commission (UNSCOM), which it entrusted with the implementation of section C of resolution 687 (1991) and gave sole responsibility to decide whether Iraq has carried out all its obligations and deserves to have the sanctions lifted.

UNSCOM has been working throughout Iraq for nearly six years. It has sent 373 inspection teams, comprising a total of 3,754 international inspectors, in addition to its established staff located in Baghdad, which is made up of more than 90 officials. The Commission uses the most up-to-date scientific and technological means and methods, which should have enabled it to accomplish its mission and verify the results of its work. Is it conceivable that this Commission has been unable to accomplish its mission to date? Would anybody ask the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM what has been accomplished and what remains to be done? Is it conceivable that UNSCOM has not yet been able to destroy the weapons of mass destruction once owned by Iraq? What has this huge army of inspectors been doing all this time? They did not come to Iraq for a vacation. Is it true that the documents and equipment which the Commission alleges to remain but has been unable to find constitute a threat to international peace and security and require the withholding of its recommendation that the sanctions against Iraq be lifted, even partially?

Iraq has fulfilled all its substantive obligations with regard to the implementation of section C of resolution 687 (1991) on the elimination of prohibited weapons. I would like to reaffirm from this rostrum, on behalf of my Government, that Iraq has retained no prohibited weapons, components of such weapons or documents related thereto. What UNSCOM has been saying about Iraq's concealment of prohibited weapons, components of such weapons or documents related thereto is based on mere suspicion unsupported by material evidence. Those suspicions emanate from American and British intelligence services and their agents.

Iraq has asked UNSCOM to address these suspicions in a practical, objective and apolitical manner. UNSCOM is not a political body to be influenced by the political goals of any one country. It is, rather, a technical

Commission obliged to carry out its tasks in a technical and scientific manner free from political conflicts and antagonistic positions. We have witnessed in our dealings with UNSCOM, however, that it tends to act out of political considerations rather than on the basis of technical and scientific facts.

My country demands that the permanent members of the Security Council — including the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Arab representative on the Council and one of the largest countries of the Middle East genuinely interested in seeing the region free from weapons of mass destruction — participate directly in the work and activities of UNSCOM and in the evaluation of its work and final conclusions. We are quite certain that, if this participation is carried out quickly and scrupulously, the conclusion will be reached, supported by evidence and convincing arguments, that the substantive issues in this file have been resolved as required by resolution 687 (1991) and that it is now time for the implementation of paragraph 22 of the said resolution.

We wish to point out that our most recent experience with work carried out under the auspices of the United Nations has proven that there is a problem with the Organization's structure. This problem is the large imbalance that exists between rights and obligations, in addition to the prevalence of the logic of force, which is not in the provisions of the Charter. The machinery of the international Organization has been used as a tool to implement the foreign policy of certain international super-Powers and to divert the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, from its natural path towards one that clearly contradicts the letter and spirit of the Charter which, as the organizing document of this Organization, forms the constitutional and legal basis upon which the United Nations must rely in all its practices.

The provisions of the Charter dictate that the Security Council shall act in accordance with these purposes and principles when discharging its duties in the maintenance of international peace and security and in adopting its resolutions, whose content and implementation should conform to the principles of justice and international law. There are restrictions that the Council should abide by when adopting its resolutions, which should accord with the purposes and principles of the Organization, so that Member States are able to fulfil their obligation to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council resolutions in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter. The Security Council is not a world Government endowed with the power of legislation and detailed implementation beyond the letter and spirit of the Charter. It is, rather, a United Nations organ that must abide by the legal norms which constitute the legal basis for international legitimacy, embodied in every provision of the Charter of the United Nations.

Believing in the principle of interdependence and in the common interests of all the peoples of the Earth, based on the sovereignty, independence and common concerns of States, Iraq has contributed and continues to contribute to the strengthening of the relations and values of multilateral international action. The poor countries of the southern hemisphere are facing a series of attempts to marginalize, isolate and prevent them from keeping pace with scientific and economic developments. These attempts include raising trade and political barriers to hinder these countries' acquisition of technology and their chances of scientific progress, thereby subjecting them willy-nilly to an economic machinery that furthers only the interests of the large industrial Powers or the rich countries of the North. As President Saddam Hussein pointed out in his speech on Iraq's National Day last July, the battle of the developing countries is the battle of the southern hemisphere for freedom, independence, development, prosperity and the enjoyment of rights and justice.

President Saddam Hussein also pointed out that the United States of America and other international Powers have promulgated slogans publicly calling upon the countries of the South to develop their capabilities and potential, allegedly in order to bale themselves out from underdevelopment, poverty and deprivation. But when Iraq developed its capabilities and potential and used this development and its oil wealth to further its national development and advançement and to enhance Iraqis' abilities and qualifications, the people responsible for the banners and slogans mobilized, under United States leadership, all the forces of evil against Iraq and attacked it with the bombs, missiles and armies of the 30-nation aggression in order to destroy my country's infrastructure and one of the new pillars of development among the countries of the South.

This places on the United Nations a large and historic obligation to shoulder the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter and to ensure the rights of all peoples and countries to peace, development and economic prosperity. The United Nations must be, as its founding fathers wanted it to be, the international instrument for the economic and social advancement of all peoples, rather than an instrument in the hands of a certain Power that uses it to impose its hegemony on the world by force and blackmail.

In conclusion, I would like to express my country's firm belief that the United Nations, through the strenuous efforts of its working groups on the reform of its structure and methods of work, and thanks to the good will of many of its Members, will in the near future again approach its true potential and capabilities to reject hegemony over it and to accomplish the goals and purposes of its Charter in conformity with international legitimacy and in the interest of the welfare and happiness of all mankind.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

A few representatives have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gnehm (United States of America): The speech we have heard from the Foreign Minister for Iraq is yet another attempt to dress a wolf in the clothing of a lamb. Before responding to the specific misstatements, I must return to the basics. The nature of the Iraqi regime is well known. This the regime that left hundreds of thousands of corpses to rot in fields and swamps in two wars which it initiated against its neighbours and in the one war it initiated, and continues to this day, against its own people. This is the only regime that has ever used weapons of mass destruction against its own citizens, the regime that weaponized such deadly biological agents as botulin and anthrax, the regime that threatened to burn its neighbours with chemical weapons.

The United States and all the other members of the United Nations, and most specifically Iraq's neighbours, know this regime for what it is. No amount of smooth talk here today about international law and legitimacy can erase that knowledge. By its actions, the Iraqi regime deliberately placed itself outside the society of law-abiding nations, a fact recognized in numerous Security Council resolutions. The most important of these resolutions for the security of the Middle East is Council resolution 687 (1991), which bans Iraq from holding or acquiring nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the means to deliver them. The Security Council adopted it because it agreed with all of Iraq's neighbours: Saddam Hussein cannot be trusted with the possession of such weapons.

The statement made today by the Foreign Minister of Iraq is no more credible than when he made it in this Hall one year ago, or when Tariq Aziz made it two years ago or three years ago — that Iraq has somehow fully complied with the Council's resolutions on weapons of mass destruction. There is not a single person in the United Nations or this Hall, and I would include even the Foreign Minister of Iraq himself, who really believes such a statement. However even the Foreign Minister did state and therefore must recognize:

> "The Special Commission ... gave sole responsibility to decide whether Iraq has carried out all its obligations". *(supra, p. 22)*

The Chairman of the Special Commission (UNSCOM), Mr. Ekeus, has constantly noted his conviction that Iraq continues to conceal weapons of mass destruction, the equipment and precursors needed to manufacture them, and great quantities of documents related to those programmes. A few members of the Security Council were willing to believe Iraq when it said it had turned over all documents and equipment. That was before August 1995, when the extent of the Iraqi concealment effort, already well known to UNSCOM, became clear to the world. Since then, not a single member of the Security Council has found this Iraqi claim to full cooperation to be credible. Several times this year Iraq has blocked access by UNSCOM inspectors to particular sites where UNSCOM had good reason to believe that prohibited materials or documents were hidden and where it had an unconditional right to inspect. For the fifth year in a row Iraq has spoken to the General Assembly about closing the weapons file. Iraq is no closer to achieving that goal in 1996 than it was in 1995, 1994 or 1993. That goal will only be achieved when there is a fundamental change in Iraq's attitude toward cooperation with the Special Commission and respect for resolutions of the Security Council. And once again today, Iraq has refused to state clearly that it has given up its intent to acquire weapons of mass destruction in the future. Sadly, there is no evidence that there has been a change in Iraqi behaviour.

And what of Iraq's other obligations, which the Foreign Minister claimed unequivocally had been met? Is this so? Then where are the properties and Government archives stolen by Saddam from Kuwait? And where are the hundreds of armoured personnel carriers, tanks, missiles and aircraft stolen by Iraq? We know the answer to the latter question. These weapons have been integrated into the elite Republican Guard units of Iraq. There will be no change in the sanctions regime until they are returned.

And where is the information held by the Iraqi Government about more than 600 Kuwaitis, Saudis and other citizens taken by the Iraqi Government from Kuwait to Iraq? Iraqi representatives to dozens of meetings sponsored by the International Committee of the Red Cross have spoken as eloquently as the Foreign Minister, but in the last year they have taken no constructive action to resolve a single one of these tragic humanitarian cases. Again, not a single member of the Security Council agrees with this claim by Iraq. Every 60 days, through 34 sanctions reviews, each member of the Council has called for Iraq to honour all of its obligations towards Kuwait, only to be met with the deception and defiance that we heard from Iraq this afternoon.

I welcome the opportunity to set the record straight with record to the implementation of resolution 986 (1995). The way the Iraqi Foreign Minister has distorted even the most basic facts about this resolution is an insult to the intelligence and humanitarian desires of every member of the Security Council. The Minister complained that it took seven months for Iraq and the United Nations to negotiate an agreement on implementation of Council resolution 986 (1995). Such distortions! The fact is that the Government of Iraq bears the sole responsibility for delaying implementation of an oil-for-food agreement for more than five years. The Security Council first established such a mechanism in September 1991, in its resolution 706 (1991). Iraq negotiated the details in bad faith for more than 24 months before simply walking away from the deal. When the Council again established such an arrangement in its resolution 986 (1995), Iraq rejected implementation for nine months before finally entering negotiations.

The truth is that the Secretariat of the United Nations had informed Iraq in late August that implementation of Council resolution 986 (1995) could begin in the first week of September. Immediately thereafter Iraqi forces launched a military action against the city of Irbil, causing a rapid deterioration in the security situation in northern Iraq.

Let this be clear to everyone, by today's date — 2 October — Iraqi oil could well have been flowing and humanitarian goods already delivered under the terms of Council resolution 986 (1995) had it not been for the action Iraq took on 31 August. That is the only reason for the current delay in implementing the resolution.

Since Saddam Hussein himself has never uttered the word "986" publicly, and has never publicly endorsed its implementation, we assume he remains opposed to it, as he always has been. We are disappointed that we did not hear from the Foreign Minister a promise that he would stop pushing the Secretary-General, who was again attacked viciously in the Iraqi press today, to change the administrative arrangements the Secretariat has already prepared in order to implement resolution 986 (1995). By contrast, the United States view is clear and unchanged. We are proud to be one of the authors and sponsors of Council resolution 986 (1995), and we wish to see it implemented. The United States, like every other member of the Security Council, cares about the suffering of the Iraqi people far more than does the very well fed Iraqi leadership. We look forward to the time that the questions raised by Baghdad's reckless actions in the North can be resolved and the resolution at last implemented.

And finally, I must reiterate a point that I made yesterday. Countries like Iraq try to evade their obligations by attempting to redefine their defiance of Security Council resolutions as a dispute between them and one, two or three other States. But the truth remains that Iraq's obligations to comply are obligations to this Organization, the United Nations. Iraq's defiance of the Security Council is a matter of concern for every delegation in this Hall, but most especially for those neighbours and for those Iraqi citizens who have experienced first-hand the brutality of this Iraqi regime.

Even if Saddam Hussein opposes Council resolution 986 (1995), we favour its implementation, just as we insist upon implementation of Security Council resolutions 687 (1991), 688 (1991), 692 (1991), 707 (1991), 715 (1991) and 1060 (1996). Until Iraq has met its obligations, the United States and the Security Council will not consider the modification of the sanctions regime.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Some who listened to the statement by the Foreign Minister of Iraq may wonder why we have requested to exercise our right of reply in spite of the lack of any specific mention of Kuwait in that statement. My answer is that my delegation would like to comment on what was stated by the Foreign Minister of Iraq:

> "all the obligations imposed on Iraq have been carried out and all the reasons for the imposition of these ... sanctions have been removed". *(supra, p. 22)*

That claim is not founded on present-day realities. That claim cannot be believed by the members of the Security Council, who every 60 days review the level of Iraq's fulfilment of all its obligations. After each review, it becomes clear to all the members of the Security Council — I repeat, all the members — that Iraq has not yet fulfilled its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

With regard to commitments that are directly related to Kuwait, allow me to recall the following. First, as regards prisoners of war and detainees from Kuwait and from third countries, despite the meetings held by the Tripartite Commission in Geneva and by the technical subcommittee, which holds monthly meetings on each side of the border, it has not been possible to close even one single file. Not a single prisoner of war has been returned. It is obvious that Iraq is benefitting from these meetings by using them to demonstrate ostensible cooperation with the committees. What the relevant Security Council resolutions require is serious and complete cooperation by Iraq with the International Committee of the Red Cross to put an end to this humanitarian tragedy as soon as possible.

I turn next to the restoration of stolen Kuwaiti military and other property, including official documents and government records, such as the Emir's records, and those of ministries, including the Foreign Ministry. As for military acquisitions — armoured personnel carriers, Hawk missiles and other weapons — we have provided Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and the members of the Security Council complete lists of all military equipment taken by Iraq. That information was also transmitted to Iraq through the United Nations Coordinator for the Return of Property from Iraq to Kuwait. In the two years since this information was forwarded to the Iraqi side there has been no response. To the contrary, some of this equipment, including tanks, was spotted during Iraq's October 1994 military build-up against Kuwait and its security and stability.

I would like to say this: Let them put their money where their mouth is. The body that defines the level of implementation is the Security Council, not the Iraqi Government. We once again call upon Iraq to release Kuwaiti prisoners of war and detainees, to return Kuwaiti property, fully to implement the provisions of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) regarding weapons of mass destruction, and to fulfil all its other obligations.

We want to end the humanitarian suffering of our brothers in Iraq. The only way to end that suffering is to expedite the implementation of all the obligations stipulated in the relevant Security Council resolutions. Our continued call for speedy implementation of Council resolution 986 (1995) gives evidence of our interest in alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people. We renew once again our call to Iraq to respond quickly to all United Nations requests for the full implementation of that resolution. Security Council resolutions are a legal and political whole that cannot be selectively or partially implemented.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): The version of events which we have just heard from the Foreign Minister of Iraq is simply staggering. In his statement the Foreign Minister has shown yet again the indifference of the Iraqi Government to the plight of its own people. He tried to escape blame for the problems faced by Iraq and its people, and to lay it at the door of others.

The responsibility for Iraq's problems rests with none other than the Government of Iraq itself. They have known for a long time what simple things need to be done to remove the sanctions, and yet they have consistently refused to do them. Let us remember why the Iraqi people are suffering in this way and the fate of the efforts which have been made to help them. As the preceding speaker said a moment ago, the word "Kuwait" does not appear in the Foreign Minister's statement. He seems to have forgotten that sanctions were first imposed following Iraq's unprovoked aggression against a fellow Member State of the United Nations. And even now there are responsibilities to Kuwait under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) which remain unfulfilled. These concern accounting for missing civilians, the return of property and other matters.

Secondly, the Foreign Minister seems to have forgotten to mention that sanctions remain in place only because of Iraq's failure to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and most particularly the failure to meet the obligation to provide a full and definitive accounting of Iraq's programmes of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. In claiming that Iraq has fulfilled the requirements of Council resolution 687 (1991), he is simply misstating the truth — truth which is very apparent from the clear reports of the Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee (UNSCOM). A year ago it might have appeared that the truth was near to being cleared up. But then new information came to light, which was admitted by the Government of Iraq and which required further investigations by UNSCOM. Since then, the pattern of obstruction of UNSCOM inspections in recent months has intensified the suspicion that the regime is hiding elements of its earlier programmes.

When all of this is so well known, the claim that Iraq has fulfilled all its obligations with regard to Council resolution 687 (1991) simply strips the statement of all credibility.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister spoke of the suffering of the Iraqi people, implying that this was also the fault of anyone except his own Government. Notwithstanding the problems regarding weapons of mass destruction, my Government, with others, sponsored Council resolution 986 (1995) in order to alleviate the suffering of the ordinary Iraqi people caused by the actions of the regime.

The offer of oil for food was made first in 1991. Security Council resolution 986 (1995) was passed in 1995. The Foreign Minister did not explain the delays by his Government in accepting that resolution. When it was finally accepted last summer, it would have been implemented by now had the attacks in the North not overturned the basis on which the Memorandum of Understanding was negotiated. We wish to see that resolution implemented as soon as the Secretary-General is sure that the conditions permit.

My Government is not alone in having spent millions of dollars through United Nations and other humanitarian programmes to assist the Iraqi people in this dark hour of their civilization. Concerning sanctions, we will continue to be guided by our concern for the security of the region, and they will remain in place until the resolutions have been dully fulfilled and the threat from Iraq to its neighbours has thereby been removed.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me to respond briefly to the representative of the United States of America. First, let me remind him that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. Has the representative of the United States forgotten that the greatest crimes against humanity have been perpetrated by his own country? Has he forgotten his country's crimes at Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Has he forgotten his country's crimes in Viet Nam, Palestine, Latin America, Cuba and other parts of the world too numerous to list? Has he forgotten his country's aggression against Iraq and the destruction of the infrastructure of our whole country, taking it back to pre-industrial times on the pretext of liberating Kuwait? Has he forgotten his country's aggression, less than a month ago, using missiles against Iraq? Who authorized the United States to use missiles against Iraq? What vital United States interests were threatened by Iraq's emancipating an Iraqi city from the forces of destruction and evil? Where is the rule of law? Where is the international machinery to preserve peace and security? Is this United States not an illegal act of terrorism? The United States must answer all these questions before it can claim to be an advocate of freedom.

The representative of the United States claimed that we have created instability in northern Iraq. What could be more absurd? Is a State's restoration of peace and security tantamount to creating instability? Has the United States not admitted that it has mobilized thousands of agents and terrorists to wage a civil war in Iraq to topple the Government of that country? Those who support the rule of law do not foment civil wars in other countries. They do not interfere in the internal affairs of States in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms which it claims to uphold.

With regard to the representative of Kuwait, we were bewildered by his long statement on a subject for which this is neither the forum nor the occasion. In our speech, we did not mention his country, as he himself admitted. If he wishes to get on the bandwagon that is his own business.

The meeting rose at 6:25 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.20

General Assembly
Fifty-first Session *Official Records*

20th plenary meeting
Thursday, 3 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The President: The Assembly will first hear a statement by Her Excellency Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Her Excellency Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

Mrs. Bhutto (Pakistan): On behalf of 130 million Pakistanis, please accept, Sir, greetings on assuming the presidency of this session of the General Assembly.

I come to address the Assembly in the twilight of the twentieth century, where we seem to be, in the words of Charles Dickens, at "the best of times" and at "the worst of times". A century now comes to a close which witnessed two world wars, a Holocaust, hunger, hopelessness and the spectre of nuclear annihilation.

But there is another twentieth century that we should remember. The candle flickers on a century that brought mankind a technological and information revolution beyond our wildest dreams; a century of breakthroughs in medicine and health, in communication, in energy, in transportation and in agriculture; a century that witnessed the triumph of liberty over authoritarianism, the triumph of the free market over government control. One historian has called the twentieth century the age of extremes. Tested time and again, the world survived.

I come before this Assembly, at this time of transition from one century to the next — from the second millennium to the third — to speak of history, of justice and of morality. Today, the United Nations stands at the crossroads, not just of the calendar, but of the direction of the community of nations.

We confront three simultaneous challenges. The first one is the proliferation of conflicts, disputes and tensions among and within nations, and the accompanying rise of national, ethnic and religious prejudice, intolerance and arrogance. The second challenge is the persistent spread of poverty. The third challenge is the growing sense of alienation, the loss of people's hope and confidence that the world's Governments will address successfully the multifaceted problems inherent in the new technological era. The manner in which we address these problems will determine the quality of life that we bequeath our children.

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

We remain deeply concerned at the conflicts and disputes in many parts of the world — in Bosnia, in Chechnya and in Azerbaijan. Our confidence in our ability to resolve conflicts has been visibly shaken after the experiences of Somalia, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Liberia, Rwanda and Burundi.

We hope that the Middle East peace process, welcomed by the world, will not be reversed and that all parties will honour their obligations under the agreements signed.

The success of the Dayton Agreement and the restoration of peace and justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be an acid test of the world community's will to prevent aggression and genocide in the future.

Yet there is another place on Earth where there is a test of strength between the principles of law and freedom and the force of aggression and foreign occupation. After the creation of the United Nations, the people of Jammu and Kashmir were among the first to have their right to self-determination recognized by the Security Council. I should like to quote the words of the Security Council itself:

> "the final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations." (*Security Council resolution 122 (1957), second preambular paragraph*)

After 50 years, the Kashmiri people still await the fulfilment of this resolution, of this commitment, of this promise.

The great African-American poet Langston Hughes asked fundamental questions about liberty. He asked:

> "What happens to a dream deferred?
> Does it dry up
> like a raisin in the sun?
> Or fester like a sore —
> And then run? (...)
> Maybe it just sags
> like a heavy load.
> Or does it explode?"

In 1989, as the winds of freedom swept across the globe, blowing away dictatorship, domination and occupation, a new generation of Kashmiris rose to demand their right to self-determination, a right that had passed from father to son, from mother to daughter — a torch rekindled from generation to generation. To suppress the brave Kashmiri youth, India sent in 600,000 military and paramilitary forces. The tools of murder, torture, rape, persecution, arson, incarceration and assassination attempts were ruthlessly used. But as the Nobel Peace Laureate Martin Luther King said,

> "Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor. It must be demanded by the oppressed."

Forty thousand Kashmiris have given their lives in opposing this oppression during the last seven years alone. India has recruited and trained renegades to subvert the Kashmiri movement, to create dissension and to tarnish the image of the struggle for freedom. Under mounting international pressure, India sought this September to divert world opinion by organizing a sham election. Those very people who claim to be front-runners in the elections cannot even enter the valley without armed escorts, much less muster popular support.

This is what the world's media had to say. The *Arab News* of 8 September 1996 reported that its correspondent visited Baramula that morning and saw the entire town deserted. Not a single person was visible on the streets, which were being heavily patrolled. *The New York Times* of 7 September 1996 reported that while India hopes that the elections will blunt the guerrillas' appeal, there are many in Srinagar who say New Delhi is chasing an illusion. The *Economic Times*, an Indian publication, of 17 September 1996 reported that a number of booths in Anantnag and Pulwama recorded single-digit voting, even as late as 3 p.m. The *Statesman*, another Indian publication, reported on 22 September 1996 that Srinagar put up a stiff resistance to elections that day, and that polling was held in a curfew-like atmosphere on deserted streets. According to the Voice of America's broadcast of 27 September 1996, United States Senator Tom Harkin said that these elections were fraudulent and would not be considered to reflect the legitimate aspirations of the Kashmiri masses.

The Chairman of the Kashmir All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Mir Umar Farooq, declared that such elections cannot be a substitute for the Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

The United Nations Security Council declared in resolution 122 (1957) that the organization of such elections does not "constitute a disposition of the State" (*resolution 122 (1957), operative para. 1*) in terms of the plebiscite to be held under the auspices of the United Nations. This was confirmed by a recent study by the International Commission of Jurists.

I should like India to remember the words of the Frenchman André Breton, who said:

> "There is nothing with which it is so dangerous to take liberties as liberty itself."

So I stand before the United Nations General Assembly and urge "to thine own self be true", to thine own Charter be true; and to thine own resolutions be true.

India may argue that the Security Council resolutions that guaranteed a plebiscite to Jammu and Kashmir are old, but there is no statute of limitations on United Nations resolutions. Occupation, repression and annexation cannot nullify the actions of the Security Council itself. The resolutions of this body cannot be applied selectively only when politically expedient.

Pakistan calls on the United Nations to implement its own Security Council resolutions 47 (1948), 51 (1948), 80 (1950), 96 (1951), 98 (1952) and 122 (1957) — seven specific and binding resolutions guaranteeing self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Kashmir is the core issue that divides India and Pakistan. I had proposed a meaningful dialogue to the new Indian Prime Minister on his assumption of office, and was encouraged by his positive response. Unfortunately, the new Government persisted with the strategy of a sham election in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The Kashmir dispute has led to four direct or indirect wars between India and Pakistan between 1947 and 1971. India has the third-largest army in the world today, almost all of which is deployed against my country Pakistan.

South Asia lacks a regional security system. We in Pakistan have made several proposals for conventional arms control: first, the negotiation of a mutually agreed ratio of forces; secondly, measures to prevent the possibility of a surprise attack; and thirdly, the adoption of agreed principles for conventional arms control in South Asia.

Over the past 30 years, Pakistan has formulated a series of proposals to contain proliferation of nuclear and missile technology in South Asia. All along, India argued that it opposed bilateral or regional measures and would accept only a global non-proliferation policy. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is exactly the kind of global measure for non-proliferation and disarmament that India had been championing for 40 years. Yet, unfortunately, India chose to veto the Treaty in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, and it opposed the Treaty at the United Nations General Assembly just last month. So now the world can see the reality.

Let me state that just as we are prepared to sign any and all nuclear treaties if India simultaneously signs with us, any step in nuclear escalation by our neighbour will find a response from us to preserve our national security.

I should like to take this opportunity to propose to this Assembly that it endorse the convening of a multilateral dialogue for peace and security in South Asia, with the participation not only of Pakistan and India, but of the five permanent members of the Security Council and other major Powers, such as Germany and Japan. This multilateral conference could cover three critical areas: first, the resolution of the Kashmir dispute and other bilateral problems between India and Pakistan; secondly, the promotion of conventional arms control and confidence-building measures; and thirdly, measures to promote nuclear restraint and avert the danger of a nuclear-arms race in South Asia. I believe that such multilateral talks offer a framework for genuine negotiations that can lead to a resolution of disputes, avert the nuclear threat and promote prosperity in South Asia. I hope this proposal will receive the support of this Assembly and of India.

A clear distinction has been made by the United Nations between terrorism and the legitimate struggle for national liberation. We in Pakistan will always be at the forefront of the effort to combat terrorism because we have frequently been victims of these crimes from across our own borders. This year alone we faced a series of cross-border terrorist attacks, but, by the grace of God, we were successful in arresting different rings of cross-border terrorists.

However, I should like to take this opportunity to express deep concern, on behalf of one billion peace-loving Muslims, at the propaganda from certain quarters. Some quarters are trying to present terrorism as peculiar to the followers of Islam; this is wrong. There is no place in Islam for acts of terrorism. However, let us acknowledge that in the post-cold-war period we are witnessing the rise of extremist fringe groups in the East and in the West. Whether it be Hindu fundamentalism, Islamic militancy, Judaic extremism, Le Pen's racism in France, or the Oklahoma bombing in America, a number of youth are turning to acts of violence. We who believe in the policies of moderation, accommodation and tolerance must unite against this new threat of violence and terror. International mechanisms and systems to check the agents of terror need strengthening, and we must condemn terrorists and extremists with one voice, irrespective of their race, religion or creed.

Pakistan is the second-largest Muslim country in the world. It is a democracy, and the Government I lead is determined to turn Pakistan into a fortress of enlightenment, emancipation and social advancement. This is no easy task given our recent history. The Afghan war led to the proliferation of arms and militancy in our region, and to the rise of ethnic, sectarian and separatist forces in the country. It spawned a drug culture and failed to equip our youth for employment in the modern world.

Today we face, along with other countries of the world, the dangers of debt, deficit and demography. I am proud to say that we in Pakistan have brought down our population growth rate from 3.1 per cent to 2.9 per cent. We hope to reduce it further, to 2.6 per cent. In the last three years, we have brought down our deficit by three points, and a billion dollars of debt has been retired. However, the cost has been heavy.

Each year we have had to present a harsh budget to pull our country out of the quicksand of debt, deficit and demography. This year alone, out of new budgetary measures of PRs. 40 billion, PRs. 22 billion went to debt servicing. The example of Pakistan shows why increasing numbers of the world's population live in poverty and squalor, without access to clean drinking water, sanitation, schools or hospitals.

These bleak realities of debt servicing breed a despair and frustration that often manifest as random violence and terrorism. Despite this grinding poverty, the aspirations of the marginalized keep rising due to the communications revolution sweeping the world.

The world needs to devise a system under which Governments adopting international standards of trade and human values get proportionate relief in their debt. Shrinking aid flows have forced countries such as Pakistan to borrow capital at commercial interest rates. Indeed, debt servicing now accounts for 47 per cent of our budget. The negative impact of such reverse transfers needs to be redressed.

Similarly, it is time to renew and implement the pledge of the developed nations to devote at least 0.7 per cent of their gross national products for assistance to the developing countries. Even this target has now dwindled to a level of 0.3 per cent of the gross national product of the developed world.

We in Pakistan, committed to the dream of our founding fathers, have chosen the path of a federal parliamentary democracy wedded to the concept of social equality. Under a democratic Government, Pakistan has played a responsible role in combating terrorism and narcotics, promoting the rights of women and children, and working on non-proliferation issues such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We have done this while confronting the forces of ethnicity, sectarianism, separatism and militancy that were tearing at our social fabric. Those who sought to undermine our country's unity by undermining peace in our port city of Karachi have been defeated.

We have a clear agenda as we move towards the twenty-first century: a Pakistan dedicated to the rule of law and to safeguarding the rights of its women, children and minorities; a Pakistan providing equal opportunity for the advancement of its citizens by investing in health and in education; a Pakistan that has already attracted over $22 billion in investment pledges.

I speak to you, Mr. President, in the twilight of a century that awaits the dawn of a fresh one. As I speak, I dream of a third millennium in which the gap between rich and poor evaporates; in which illiteracy, hunger, malnutrition and disease are at long last conquered; in which every child is planned, wanted, nurtured and supported; and in which the birth of a girl is welcomed with the same joy as that of a boy. I dream of a millennium of tolerance and pluralism, in which people respect other people, nations respect other nations, and religions respect other religions.

That is the third millennium I see for my country and others — for all children. Let the United Nations be the infrastructure for making this dream into a reality.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the statement she has just made.

Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic, His Excellency Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Fernández Reyna (Dominican Republic) *(interpretation from Spanish):* The Dominican Republic was among the countries that founded the United Nations. But this is only the third time, in 51 years, that its Head of State has come to address the General Assembly. Perhaps the reason for this noticeable absence of our country during the many years that this great annual event has been held is that following the Second World War, the international system revolved around super-Power rivalry, giving rise to the cold war. In context, it is probable that our leaders felt that their presence here would have been merely symbolic, with no real importance.

That this may have been the case in the past, but the world has changed. From the dramatic transformations in the geopolitical environment, a multi-polar international system has emerged, in which the economy matters more than ideologies and military conflicts. This reorganization of the international system on the basis of strategic economic objectives has been accompanied by a scientific and technological revolution, a revolution of knowledge that spread across the planet and brought about the most profound change ever experienced in the history of humankind, turning the world into one large neighbourhood.

In the new international order that arose following the cold war, the Dominican Republic could not remain isolated. That is why we are here today: to proclaim to the world that the Dominican Republic is now actively joining the group of nations represented in this multilateral Organization, so that, through international contacts and exchange, it can contribute to forging a better future for humanity and, accordingly, a more promising future for Dominicans.

To ensure our participation in the various forums of the United Nations forums, exercising all the rights that have been bestowed upon us, we proceeded, first, to pay our financial debts in full. To the Dominican Republic, the payment of our arrears is evidence of our confidence and faith in the capability of the United Nations to play a role in the international arena to guarantee international peace and security as well as respect for human dignity and fundamental human rights.

Nevertheless, just as we understand that the world has changed, that there is a new international agenda governed by the common concerns of all peoples over environment preservation, population growth, respect for human rights, strengthening of democratic systems, recognition of women's rights, and the social and economic development of nations, we also understand that this Organization must be renewed and readapted to the new world circumstances.

Latin America and Africa do not have permanent representatives on the Security Council, and Asia has only one. This means that there is uneven representation in that important body, which is incomprehensible in an Organization whose Members enjoy equal footing, on the principle that they are all sovereign States. It is our humble suggestion that the Security Council should be extended to enable Asia, Africa and Latin America to have two permanent seats on that body and that the number of non-permanent representatives be increased to democratize the decision-making machinery in that forum for peace.

In one of his most frequently-cited works on the Caribbean, entitled *El Caribe, Frontera Imperial*, the former Dominican President and author, Juan Bosch, wrote as follows:

> "The history of the Caribbean is the history of the struggle of empires against the peoples of the region in order to rob them of their rich lands. It is also the history of the struggle of empires against one another to rob the possessions each one had conquered. Lastly, it is the history of the peoples of the Caribbean to free themselves from their imperial masters."

This direct contact with the major Powers over the course of five centuries, a product of these confrontations, has marked the Caribbean, perhaps forever, with a particular stamp of fragmented histories, and different cultures and languages. Yet we are always seeking unity within diversity.

Recent years have brought greater understanding and closer bonds between us, based on the understanding that we have a common destiny. As proof of this, our country is a founding member of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), an organization bringing together nations that are very different both in ethnic terms and in development levels, and thus reflecting the richness and variety of our region.

We would be pleased to see formal contact with and backing from the United Nations for that recently created body, in support of the efforts we have made to strengthen our relations and to work for our peoples' development.

Similarly, we have been participating in the Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States, which is made up of Caribbean countries that benefit from the Fourth Lomé Convention. This forum has carried out a series of regional projects financed with European Union resources.

As an observer, and aspiring full-fledged member, of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), we view with great interest the widening and deepening relationship between the United Nations and CARICOM. We urge that the necessary steps are be taken to intensify the cooperation and coordination between the two institutions, which would enable us to achieve our common goals.

The countries of the Caribbean are facing the challenges of current circumstances, as the advantages of access to markets are being eroded because of the implementation of World Trade Organization agreements, the effects of a single European market, the consolidation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the movement towards reciprocity and similar trends.

Our participation in preferential access schemes depends on the observance of established standards with regard to workers' rights, human rights, intellectual property rights, the environment and civil liberty — matters that go beyond economic considerations.

We have gained certain advantages from preferential trading with the United States and the European Union, as a result of greater prosperity that led to an increase in import demand from those countries and an increase in tourism in the Caribbean. By contrast, we must endure the complications of the new rules and harmonization standards that have come into force. We have not yet taken full advantage of the benefits deriving from such concessional agreements as the Fourth Lomé Convention, the Generalized System of Preferences, and the Caribbean Basin initiative.

Our high dependence on foreign trade, the shortage in the supply of goods and services and unsuitable marketing methods constitute elements of vulnerability that affect, to a greater or lesser extent, all the countries of the region. We must overcome these limitations and define areas in which we can be competitive. Strengthening cooperation is one way to support the Caribbean integration process and rectify such weaknesses.

When referring to the Caribbean, let us not forget the situation in Haiti, the country with which we share the island of Hispaniola. We view with sympathy the process of democratization that is unfolding in that country, and we appeal to the international community to do its utmost to assist in the huge task faced by the children of the country of Toussaint L'Ouverture in constructing a better future for their countrymen.

One of the first foreign-policy actions of our Government was to encourage a cooperative and friendly relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and we put in place the Joint Bilateral Commission. After a fruitful meeting, which took place a few day ago in Port-au-Prince, that Commission agreed to a series of technical exchange agreements in the fields of tourism, agriculture, trade and investment, sports and border and immigration matters. Furthermore, we defined the conditions for joint strategies to take advantage of funds provided by multinational sources, such as those granted by the European Union under the terms of the Fourth Lomé Convention.

I would now like to direct the attention of the General Assembly to a subject that just a few years ago was on the front pages of all the newspapers of the world and that, even though it still has a considerable impact on the effectiveness of development policies, has vanished from the world's attention: the problem of foreign debt. The countries of the region have carried out a series of adjustment programmes in an attempt to regain external financial solvency. Nonetheless, there are still considerable imbalances as a result of the burden of debt servicing, without a corresponding recovery in the terms of exchange that would allow us to create greater resources through our exports.

In the case of the Dominican Republic, foreign debt increased 13-fold between 1964 and 1994. Today, thanks to our extraordinary efforts, our country is now current with its international creditors, which means that we are eligible for further external financing. However, being current with our payments to international credit organizations has meant that our Government has incurred greater social debts to the Dominican people. There are fewer resources to invest in education, health, housing and social security and, ultimately, to deal with the critical situation of poverty that affects most of our people.

In its 51 years of existence, the United Nations has made extraordinary efforts to eradicate bellicose conflicts in different parts of the world and to contribute to the maintenance of peace and international security. But great human sacrifice is inherent in the theatre of war, and our impoverished neighbourhoods have adopted the names of war-torn places, symbolizing the extent of their fight against misery. In the Dominican Republic the poor and marginalized neighbourhoods have adopted such names as Viet Nam, Katanga and Cambodia; none of them, of course, is called Sweden, Japan or Germany. This means that this international Organization's new role is to guarantee international peace and security through mechanisms to promote the economic and social development of the less fortunate nations.

For this reason, with respect to debt, our country believes that multilateral organizations that provide development assistance and the donor Governments, together with the debtors, must find more lasting solutions to the burden of foreign debt servicing, so that we can release resources that can immediately be used to fight poverty and to stop the deterioration of the environment.

We have made progress in that regard, and it is fair to recognize that the G-7, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the regional banks for development assistance, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, have consistently designed and implemented important mechanisms to alleviate the foreign-debt burden, among which the so-called Brady plan and the G-7 programmes for the reduction of bilateral debt stand out.

However, in the near future we will need to review some of the sacred principles prevalent in the international financial community now for many years, such as those related to the Paris Club cut-off date and the impossibility of debt restructuring with multilateral organizations. This affects especially the so-called least developed countries, which could receive preferential treatment in this regard. The Dominican Republic therefore urges all interested parties to move forward to enable the underdeveloped countries to implement viable programmes against poverty and marginalization, within a financially sustainable context.

In addition to the fight against poverty, at this stage of reforming the international system it is important to take all appropriate measures to fight terrorism and illegal drug trafficking, scourges that deeply affect the normal development of mankind. Recently, international drug cartels have tried to use Caribbean routes to carry out their illegal operations. The Dominican Republic has been taking all possible measures to prevent the use of its territory as a medium for drug trafficking and drug use. For Dominicans, drug use and trafficking are a national security problem, which we will fight with the necessary force to eliminate an evil that has become the great plague of mankind at the end of the twentieth century.

In expressing its willingness to play a more active role in the international system, the Dominican Republic also expresses its concern at the many unresolved conflicts in different parts of the world. We advocate a definitive and peaceful resolution of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina; of the search for peace in Middle East between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization; of cooperation and assistance with regard to situations such as those of Somalia, Burundi and Liberia. As to the Republic of China on Taiwan, we believe that due to its location in the centre of East Asia, its security and stability bear a close relation with the peace and prosperity of that region, and we therefore encourage both the sides along the Taiwan Strait to resume constructive dialogue with a view to achieving mutual cooperation and understanding. We believe that the parallel participation of both sides in the United Nations would be conducive to maintaining peace.

We stand at the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, which will bring new challenges as well as new opportunities for human progress, and an Organization such as the United Nations has always served to stimulate the noblest of human aspirations. The Dominican Republic, trusting in God and in the creative capacity of its people, aspires to be a spokesman and an instrument for channelling the ideals of justice, peace, democracy and prosperity, which inspire the civilized nations of the world.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: I now call on the Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal and for Senegalese living abroad, His Excellency Mr. Moustapha Niasse.

Mr. Niasse (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): Your noteworthy election, Sir, to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session is an eloquent and solemn tribute from the Members of our Organization to your great country, Malaysia. Your intellectual and moral qualities, your faith in the United Nations and your vast experience in international relations guarantee, in our view, success in the work of this session. For all these reasons, Senegal, which enjoys a strong relationship of friendship and cooperation with your country, is happy to convey to you, through me, warm congratulations. We assure you of our full support in the achievement of the lofty mission entrusted to you.

To your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, I wish to express our profound gratitude for the effectiveness, competence and the commitment with which he discharged his mandate during a historic and particularly productive session.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, at this fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali is an ardent champion of peace and cooperation among peoples, and his commendable work for the United Nations should be emphasized today, to encourage perseverance along this path. Moreover, the African Heads of State recently adopted at Yaoundé a statement recommending his re-election to a second term of office as United Nations Secretary-General.

Mr. Fernández Estigarribia (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The international climate today strikes us as one of those special situations that should awaken our consciences, inviting us to enhance our efforts and clarity of vision to ensure humanity a future of peace, solidarity and cooperation.

Indeed, we are meeting at a time conducive to major changes in the life of our Organization. The most striking illustration of our common desire for reform was expressed here last year, during the solemn commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It was in that spirit that during the commemorative meeting of the General Assembly some of the most authoritative voices in the world — those of 128 Heads of State and Government — forcefully reaffirmed their profound faith in the United Nations, its principles and objectives.

Furthermore, these leaders unanimously called for in-depth reflection so that we might enter the twenty-first century with a restructured, reinvigorated Organization, equipped with the necessary human, material and financial resources to more effectively accomplish the lofty mission of an Organization that harmonizes the complementary efforts of Member States in order to achieve new goals in a context of freedom and active solidarity.

Guaranteeing peace and collective security; developing friendly relations among nations based on shared values; promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and developing varied forms of cooperation in the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian fields — these were the dreams of those who, 50 years ago, created the United Nations. They are still today the foundation, the moral basis and the justification for the objectives we must continue to pursue in these final years of the twentieth century, a century that, despite two world wars, was one of prodigious discoveries — a century that saw man walk on the moon, explore the environs of Mars and make significant progress in combating disease.

However, we must agree that today's world is not the world of 50 years ago. This one presents new and widespread dangers but also offers different possibilities. We must therefore close ranks, minimize our differences and combine our efforts, as peoples, nations, States and communities.

Today, all nations face an enormous paradox: on the one hand, countries have never been closer to one another due to the increasing globalization of technology; on the other hand, the fragmentation of nationalities has triggered the resurgence of new forms of confrontation and conflict, as well as misunderstandings and serious delays in the evolution of continents.

During the cold-war period, it was generally considered that the main threats to peace would come from wars between States, and the greatest fear was that a nuclear conflict would break out and devastate the planet.

The end of the cold war gave rise to a sense of trust in the advent of a world free from the spectre of a nuclear cataclysm, which we welcomed with optimism. We shared the belief that the many regional conflicts could be resolved quickly once they were no longer fuelled by unbridled military assistance and by positions of continual escalation in both hemispheres.

Today, unfortunately, we are forced to recognize that the state of the world for the most part belies these optimistic visions; many old conflicts continue to resist the international community's attempts to settle them. Pernicious and persistent intra-State conflicts have broken out. The conflicts in Africa and in the former Yugoslavia illustrate this situation.

Indeed, from Angola to Somalia, from Burundi and Rwanda to Liberia, Africa is beset by conflicts whose nature, as we are forced to recognize, prevents the proper and effective implementation of the solutions proposed.

It is true that significant progress has been made in some of these conflicts, particularly in Angola and to a lesser extent in Rwanda. We need to continue our efforts in this direction.

In other conflicts, the road to peace remains uncertain. In Liberia, the situation is extremely murky due to the difficulty of managing conflicts between rival factions, despite the initiatives of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African countries in the area.

However, we must not become discouraged. At the recent Ministerial meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) took some courageous decisions. These, we hope, will create new conditions conducive to the normalization of the situation in that country through the organization of free and democratic elections, with the full support of the entire international community.

Turning to Burundi, it is clear that the measures prescribed by the United Nations and by the OAU have not managed to end the bloodshed, nor did they prevent the military *coup de force* of 25 July last. This is regrettable and we must take action.

However, we must not lose faith. Given this new situation, Senegal, like the African countries of the Great Lakes region, calls for the restoration of constitutional order and reaffirms its conviction that any solution to the crisis in Burundi requires the initiation — despite any feelings of resentment — of a free and transparent dialogue in good faith between the various parties to the conflict.

In Europe, the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia represented, before it was torn apart, a successful example of a pluralistic and harmonious ethnic and religious coexistence, which was the pride of the world. It was in the name of these values that, from the beginning of the conflict, Senegal rejected any notion of partitioning Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that is why it welcomed with great hope the signing of the Dayton Agreement. It is in this spirit that the momentum for peace of this Agreement must be consolidated.

In this regard, the smooth conduct of the elections of 14 September was an important step. The prosecution, arrest and sentencing of war criminals by the international criminal Tribunal remains a major test for the international community. More than that, is it a matter of proving that our community is able to implement Security Council decisions.

Against this background, Senegal, my country, will continue, as it has in the past, to do what it can within the framework of the Contact Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to bring about the advent of a Bosnia and Herzegovina at peace with itself, so that the seeds of peace and stability can finally bear fruit in this war-torn land and throughout the rest of the former Yugoslavia.

Exactly one year ago we welcomed with relief the signing of the Washington and Taba agreements — important milestones for the establishment of peace and reconciliation between the peoples of the Middle East. The door thus opened must never close again. Today, regrettably, doubts and the fear of returning to a past marked by war and hatred are beginning to resurface. Let us put an end to these threats while there is still time.

While my country has always believed, and continues to believe, that some realities are inescapable — the existence of Israel is one of them — it is also of the opinion that the security of that State can, in the long term, be assured only in the framework of respect for, and implementation of, the current peace process, which should lead to the definitive creation of a sovereign and independent Palestinian state, a fully-fledged member of the international community.

It is therefore up to the new Israeli Government, elected in May 1996, to make decisive efforts so that the flame of peace, ignited just recently with such courage and clear-sightedness, continues to inspire the leaders and peoples of Israel and Palestine towards a Middle East that builds its future on a spirit of solidarity, cooperation and friendship.

Given the changes in the world since the fall of the Berlin Wall and given the new types of conflicts, which require a new approach to the management of our collective security system, our Organization, the United Nations, must be understood, supported and strengthened.

Increasingly, the United Nations has been called on to create a new generation of peacekeeping operations. The Blue Helmets have been joined by civil experts who provide political, economic, social and humanitarian assistance, thus contributing to the stabilization of situations and conflicts as well as to the search for a political settlement to conflicts through national reconciliation whenever necessary.

Accordingly, my country, Senegal, will continue to take part with resolve in this noble mission in the service of peace, with the conviction that has always inspired our international policy. This same desire prompted its participation, with 36 other countries, in the standby forces system initiated recently by the Secretary-General, as well as its commitment to the establishment of an early warning and rapid reaction system.

Guided by these same principles, Senegal continues to make a modest contribution to the attainment of the goal of comprehensive and effective disarmament. Senegal's recent admission to the Conference on Disarmament, when that body was expanded, attests to its will to work together with all peace-loving nations to build a better future in a world free from weapons of mass destruction.

In this respect, I wish to welcome warmly the agreement concluded here on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, particularly since it meets the concerns of all Member States of our Organization, specifically the African States. In a spirit of remarkable unanimity, African States signed in Cairo last March the Pelindaba agreement on the denuclearization of the continent.

In the same spirit, the international community recently took an important step to halt the nuclear arms race with the adoption by the General Assembly on 10 September 1996 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which my country has just signed on 26 September 1996, here in New York.

However, it is a fact that at a time when the international community faces new challenges stemming from the end of the cold war, our Organization will increasingly be asked to play a more central role in world affairs. Naturally this means that meaningful improvements must be made in the work of the Organization; most importantly, the principle of universality should be implemented methodically and effectively. Accordingly, the restructuring and democratization of the Security Council must remain a priority goal. This central body of the United Nations must reflect in its decision-making process the concerns of the entire membership of our Organization. Its reform must lead to increased transparency and a better representation by all regions of the world.

Guided by the ideal of the universality of the United Nations, Senegal supports the request of the Republic of China to be admitted to membership in our Organization, and, generally speaking, to membership in the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. It is inarguable, in our opinion, that that State, in view of its socio-economic performance, its development level, its commitment to democratic values and its behaviour in international affairs meets all the criteria and conditions set forth by the Charter of the United Nations for admission to membership. This admission to membership, should it occur, would make an important contribution to stabilizing international relations in that part of Asia and would allow for an unprecedented economic, technical and cultural cooperation among the countries of South-East Asia and Africa. Its admission would in no way jeopardize the efforts made by the international community for peace and development in the world.

The values of peace, freedom and economic and social justice, which 50 years ago inspired the creation of our Organization, must now more than ever remain the basis of our common action towards a life of dignity for all. The post-cold-war experience has taught us once again that the many facets of underdevelopment remain a serious threat to international peace and security.

Now that globalization and interdependence are phenomena recognized by all, we must understand that the destiny of humankind is one and indivisible. This obvious truth must persuade us to seek, in a spirit of solidarity, joint solutions to the persistent problems of underdevelopment. The series of major world conferences set to conclude next November with the World Food Summit — a positive initiative welcomed by my country — is an encouraging sign of the international community's resolve to meet these challenges in the best interests of the peoples of the world, on the basis of a comprehensive, integrated approach to human development.

We need now to maintain and strengthen that spirit by mobilizing additional financial resources, without which the commitments undertaken will remain a dead letter, which would betray the legitimate hopes to which they gave rise. We must find an early and comprehensive solution to the severe debt crisis. The components of the problem are fairly clear today. The sustained structural-adjustment efforts made by our country will remain futile and ineffective if external factors such as the debt burden and the deterioration of the terms of trade continue seriously to hinder our development prospects.

The Agenda for Development gives us a new opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to world peace and stability by defining a comprehensive framework for action based on economic justice, social well-being, the protection of human rights and the preservation of the environment.

The development of Africa, and I cannot overemphasize this point, is the primary responsibility of the Africans themselves. That is why in many African countries today Governments continue with determination to carry out bold and difficult reforms, reflected, *inter alia*, in the improved and more rational use of public funds, in the opening of our economies to international trade and in the creation of conditions conducive to private enterprise and to the transparent management of public affairs with, most importantly, all sectors of society participating in the work of national development, in the interests of all. In this regard, we must pay tribute to the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for the assistance and support they have extended to our countries. For these ongoing efforts to be successful, they must be supported by increased official development assistance, substantial debt relief and by the lifting of barriers and other protectionist measures. These three areas require dynamic action on the part of the international community.

Senegal is firmly convinced that we can combat African pessimism if we are resolved jointly to promote a mutually beneficial partnership for the recovery of an Africa with enormous potential, which, if tapped, would offer our partners real opportunities. It was this conviction, let us recall, that prompted the Head of State of Senegal, His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, to take the initiative during his first term of office as Acting Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, to request the convening for the first time of a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the economic situation in Africa. That is the light in which my country sees the two initiatives devoted to Africa: the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the Special Initiative for Africa, launched by the Secretary-General in March 1996.

Furthermore, we noted that the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa at this session gave a very frank assessment of what must be done to make this project a genuine framework for multilateral cooperation and a source of inspiration for a fruitful partnership for development.

In conclusion, I should like to touch on the United Nations financial crisis, which has become a source of major concern for all our States. Since the causes of the situation have been discussed at length in this very Hall, I do not believe it is necessary to recall them. However, one thing is very clear. At a time when our Organization is committed on several fronts, both to restoring peace and to strengthening its role as the primary framework and instrument for the advent of the new world order, its financial stability is essential to enable us jointly to meet the major challenges ahead.

Therefore, my country, Senegal, would like once again to appeal to all Member States regularly to meet their financial obligations. In this regard, it is essential that the credibility of the United Nations not be impugned at a time when, individually and collectively, we have such high hopes for the future of humankind.

Once again, the effectiveness of the United Nations will depend upon our common resolve to harmonize our own interests to achieve our shared goals in strict accordance with the fundamental principles of the San Francisco Charter.

As our President, His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, has said repeatedly, Senegal will continue, as it has in the past, to work tirelessly for the attainment of the ideals of peace, justice and solidarity, and to reaffirm and seek compliance with all the principles on which a true international community, sharing a common destiny, is based.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. David Levy.

Mr. Levy (Israel) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first, Sir, to congratulate Mr. Razali Ismail on his unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session and to wish him every success. I would also like to thank his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for the outstanding manner in which he carried out his duties.

The succession of Governments, which is a defining principle of Israeli democracy, has recently brought to power a new Government in Israel. A section of the international community has deemed this democratic Israeli choice impertinent, suggesting that it would work against regional peace. In response to this prejudice I would like to make a simple statement: Israel is united in its quest for peace. It is not a question of good people and peace-seekers on one side and mischief-makers and people who reject peace on the other. In Israel, those on the left and right converge in their quest for peace, their sensibilities and differences notwithstanding.

I wish to raise the recent history of the Israeli-Arab peace process in order to dispel any ambiguity regarding the practice of peace in Israel and to show that the new majority cannot be disqualified from efforts to achieve peace. The peace between Israel and Egypt is a founding landmark of coexistence between Israelis and Arabs. The Madrid Conference, to which I had the honour of contributing, also bears the special stamp of the pioneers of peace, to whose achievements the new majority in Israel are the direct heirs.

The firm commitment of the Netanyahu Government with respect to the Oslo accords is also closely tied to the peace process, which our immediate neighbours, Egypt and Jordan, helped to shape. However, my Government's swift engagement in the peace process has been minimized, reduced and distorted. The meetings that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence of the State of Israel and I have had with the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority have been met with sarcasm and given only secondary importance. Those meetings dealt precisely with the substance and the content of peace. They initiated the ways and means necessary for the achievement of peace. They amplified the resonance of the Oslo accords and extended mutual Israeli-Palestinian recognition to new sections of society and Israeli political classes. It is Israel's determination to reach peace according to the policies and fundamental guidelines of the new Government.

On its road to peace, the Government of Israel is guided by several principles, which I would like to expound. For us, security is neither an obsession nor a blind belief. It touches upon our very existence in a region where, unfortunately, threats and instability still rage. Security must be the cornerstone in the architecture of peace. It cannot, under any circumstances, tag along behind a process in which terrorism and violence have not yet spoken their last word.

Negotiations themselves, through their joint creative energies, allow us to control the dangers and drifts. The battle against terrorism and its infrastructures and its sources of financing and assistance is not only for us to fight. We solemnly call upon the United Nations relentlessly to pursue active cooperation in the struggle against terrorism and in condemning it unequivocally. It is imperative to preserve the Israeli-Palestinian peace process free from violence.

I have just returned from the Washington summit, held at the initiative of President Clinton. On behalf of the Government and the people of Israel, I wish, from this rostrum, to thank the President and the Secretary of State of the United States for their exemplary contribution to peace by bringing the parties together and for their profound commitment to reinvigorating the peace process. In this respect the role and contribution of the United States remain of great importance.

On Sunday the Israeli and Palestinian teams will convene again in an attempt to resolve their differences in respect of the various agreements. We are responsible to our people and to our whole region in this matter. We must therefore display good faith and mutual understanding in order to fulfil our mission, and to send out the message of stable peace and lasting security.

The Washington summit reconfirmed the principles and guidelines for the negotiations. I associate myself wholeheartedly with President Clinton's statement that face-to-face negotiations in a constructive atmosphere are the key to resolving problems. A future free of hostility and the renunciation of violence: these represent the very basis of mutual efforts for peace.

The choice is in our hands. Will we opt for cooperation, progress, real peace and security? Or will we revert to the dark days of conflict, confrontation and violence, thereby putting an end to all hope? For its part, Israel has chosen hope.

Another major principle in our search for peace is the will of the partners to allow a tangible peace to exist. Regional cooperation is a critical factor in ensuring peace and stability. Israel entertains no dreams of economic hegemony; it wishes to play its fair role in the creation of regional cooperation. This is a basic principle of normalization. Peace and normalization are one and indivisible. Consequently, if we are to follow the logic of peace and dialogue, we cannot risk having normalization taken hostage and brought to a halt.

Israel makes no secret that normalization of its relations with the Arab world must be fully implemented. This means comprehensive political and economic relations, and the broadest possible intellectual, cultural and spiritual acceptance. Some of our neighbours still view Israel as a body foreign to the region. Normalization must erase forever the residue of this ideological negation. Normalization is the indispensable cement for keeping together the edifice of peace.

One of our immediate goals is the resumption of negotiations with Syria on the basis of the Madrid principles, which inaugurated the dialogue between the two countries. We recognize Syria's important role in the establishment of lasting peace in our region. From this rostrum, we call upon President Al-Assad to resume negotiations.

As to Lebanon, we have no territorial disputes with Lebanon. We are committed to its sovereignty. Lebanon can be fertile ground for the restoration of confidence and the building of peace.

Egypt and its President, Mr. Hosni Mubarak, are our partners in peace. They are the authors and actors that have always been engaged in all stages of the peace process.

Jordan is unquestionably a decisive factor in the building of peace in our region. A man of peace and dialogue, His Majesty King Hussein has actively supported the peace process and has provided a vital guarantee of continuity. The Washington summit enjoyed his complete support.

On the long path to peace, the country of Morocco, the country of my birth and family roots, has always walked and illuminated the path of Israeli-Arab reconciliation. The vision displayed by His Majesty King Hassan II has left its distinctive mark on the entire Arab-Israeli dialogue. The Moroccan King will continue his essential role and breathe into peace the remarkable inspiration of his solidarity.

I would like to pay tribute also to the active support of Tunisia. Oman, Qatar and, more recently, Mauritania have all helped to consolidate peace efforts.

The peace process has benefitted from the considerable support of the co-sponsors, the United States and Russia, and from the active and positive contribution of the European Union and Norway and of Powers such as Japan and Canada.

Once again, I wish solemnly to reaffirm Israel's irreversible commitment and determination to pursue the path of peace.

Since the dawn of history our region has been a meeting point of diverse civilizations and cultures, a vibrant wellspring of progress for all of humanity. At the crossroads of continents and countries, the Middle East must, in times of peace, discover again the genius of this place and the richness of its edifying civilizations. Arabs and Jews must pool their knowledge and wisdom to regenerate their vocation as the promoters of life and humanity.

Through international cooperation, Israel is sharing with young countries from Africa to Asia, from Latin America to China, its achievements and assets in the fields of agriculture, health and science.

We hope that the day will come when a regional security system will be established in the Middle East to provide a cooperative multilateral response to all security problems. The advantage of this regional approach is that it is based on direct negotiations between the States of the region. The first stage is to build confidence, and thereafter we must put arms control and disarmament mechanisms into place. For this reason, Israel welcomed the establishment of the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group as part of the multilateral talks. We hope that in the future this framework will encompass all States of the Middle East.

Israel's position is defined by a dual mandate: to set ambitious objectives, and to pursue them pragmatically and realistically. After peace and reconciliation have been established among all the States of the region, Israel will endeavour to establish in the Middle East a zone free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons as well as ballistic missiles. This demilitarization will be subjected to rigorous verification.

Negotiations to establish such a zone will commence following the signing of bilateral peace accords between Israel and all the countries of the region. In the meantime Israel will implement confidence-building measures that will increase openness and transparency and, thereby, make a contribution to easing tensions and preventing all armed conflict.

We generally prefer regional security arrangements. However, Israel is in favour of the implementation of certain aspects of international mechanisms for arms control and disarmament where appropriate. Accordingly, Israel signed the Convention on conventional weapons and adopted a moratorium on the manufacture and export of anti-personnel landmines. It has also signed the Treaty against the use of chemical weapons and now the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Israel will consider ratification of that Treaty depending upon developments in the region, particularly the adoption of that Treaty by the major countries.

Israel has thus demonstrated its determination to be involved, whenever possible, in the efforts of the international community to prevent the spread of conventional and non-conventional weapons.

Israel strongly desires to be an active and fully-fledged member of the family of nations represented in this Organization. We note with regret and deep disappointment that the question of our membership in a regional group has still not been resolved. Israel is thus deprived of the right available to all States Members of the United Nations to participate on an equal footing in all its activities. This impairs the principle of equality among sovereign nations under the Charter of the United Nations. I hope that this injustice will be rectified and that Israel will finally be able to act within this Organization on the same footing as all other Member States.

It is with the subject of Jerusalem, whose very name is invoked in so many prayers for peace, that I wish to conclude. Jerusalem is the cradle of the three great religions. We reaffirm this status daily by respecting and ensuring total freedom of worship and spiritual expression for all believers. It is an entirely shared religious reality to which Israel has made a profound contribution.

Jerusalem, the horizon of our dreams and prayers, has throughout our exile and dispersions constituted the summit of our collective being. Capital of Israel, both in ancient and modern times, never has Jerusalem been the capital of any country other than Israel.

Rarely if ever has any sovereign State been denied the right to freely determine its capital. Israel, the people of peace restored to sovereignty after 2,000 years of exile, has returned to the city of peace, *Yerushalayim*: Jerusalem. Thereby it demonstrates its unswerving devotion to its ancestral capital to renew its psalm of peace: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem". We shall tirelessly dedicate all our efforts to that search for peace.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call next on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport of Barbados, Her Excellency The Honourable Billie Miller.

Ms. Miller (Barbados): It is my pleasure to congratulate Ambassador Razali on his election as President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. The Barbados delegation shares fully the confidence expressed in his leadership and assures him of its cooperation in the work of this Assembly.

Let me also warmly commend his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his outstanding stewardship of the fiftieth session, including the Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. That celebration, which brought together 128 Heads of State or Government, stands as a fitting memorial to the historic event.

My country's knowledge of and appreciation for the United Nations system has deepened since we had the honour to host the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing

States in 1994. The Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action outlined the way forward for the relationship between small island developing States and the international community. The Barbados Conference was the first and to date the only follow-up Global Conference to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, because it was recognized that small island developing States have a critical role to play in sustainable development.

Barbados and other members of the Alliance of Small Island States will unremittingly pursue the follow-up to the Programme of Action because our survival depends on it. We have, however, been disappointed to note that so much of the promise of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States has as yet gone unfulfilled, and we will engage the international community further to ensure that our concerns are addressed.

Barbados welcomes the coming into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the establishment of the International Seabed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. This new regime for the world's oceans is of particular interest to us and to small island developing States in general, because of the critical link between the maritime environment and our land mass. Small island developing States are in some ways just coastal zones, and as such have a particularly intimate relationship with the oceans, upon which we depend for food and which are pivotal to our tourism industry.

It is in this context that we view with apprehension the use of the Caribbean Sea for the trans-shipment of nuclear and other hazardous materials. While we understand the needs of countries to dispose of and reprocess waste materials, and we recognize their right to do so under Law of the Sea, International Maritime Organization and International Atomic Energy Agency regulations, we fear the consequences of accidents for an environment which is so highly fragile. The Caribbean presents a unique combination of factors which demand that it be treated with special care: large numbers of small island developing States, a semi-enclosed sea subject to violent seasonal storms, and the presence of one of the most intensively used shipping passages, the Panama Canal. The Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community have repeatedly declared their opposition to the use of the Caribbean Sea for trans-shipment of nuclear materials. We look forward to deepened dialogue with flag States and other concerned States and organizations to ensure that we are all aware of what is being shipped, when and where, and how best to manage it.

The vulnerability of Caribbean micro-States is further increased by narco-trafficking. This illicit trade threatens the very existence of our democracies, a point that was reinforced earlier this year when the United Nations International Drug Control Programme held a conference in Barbados on drug enforcement and rehabilitation cooperation in the Caribbean.

Regional cooperation is the responsible and effective means for implementing international agreements dealing with this matter. The response of the international community to our peculiar set of problems has been encouraging, but it must continue to be upgraded. We suffer not so much because we are major end-users, but because of our strategic location in this traffic. We will continue in our efforts, with the limited resources we have at our disposal, to ensure that the drug traffic does not undermine the foundations of our democracies. We will not stand accused of not cooperating with our partners, but neither will we allow our hard-fought sovereignty to be sacrificed in the tug-of-war between the moral and societal imperative to curtail demand and the need to reduce supply.

As we herald the International Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, this delegation is appalled that in 1996, despite the advances in technology and the new wealth being generated by the forces of globalization, millions of children still do not have access to the most basic necessities.

Just as we argued at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) that humankind has a right to housing, Barbados fully supports the notion that individuals have a right to adequate nourishment. We look forward to the World Food Summit later this year in Rome as being the catalyst for major change towards alleviating hunger.

Women are among the most impoverished groups in our societies, and gender equality is a major vehicle for achieving sustainable human development. Although Barbados ranks high on the human development index, particularly as it relates to gender equality, the Beijing Platform for Action remains for us a critical policy and action framework.

The landmark fiftieth session was an occasion for solemn reflection on the mission and performance of th

United Nations and for a constructive assessment of the challenges which confront the Organization in the post-cold-war world. Member States have left no doubt about the critical role that the United Nations must continue to play in fostering global peace and security and promoting sustainable development. They have recognized that, notwithstanding its shortcomings, this Organization remains the only universal mechanism which offers the hope of achieving the goals for humanity enshrined in its Charter. The task with which we have been charged is to revitalize the United Nations and to strengthen its capacity to meet the new demands of rapid global change. My delegation therefore attaches the greatest importance to the Working Groups established by the General Assembly to advance the reform process, in order to make the world a more peaceful place and to improve the Organization's effectiveness in promoting economic and social development.

Reform is now the order of the day. No country or institution can neglect the reality of globalization or the technological revolution that drives this process. It poses major challenges for countries and societies, particularly small developing countries. We recognize only too well our own vulnerability to marginalization, stemming from intense global competition and reform of major global institutions, including the United Nations. Barbados therefore follows with special interest the consultations taking place in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other Matters Related to the Security Council. The question of equitable representation of small States is of particular concern, and we are studying closely those proposals which take this concept into account. At the same time, we note with satisfaction the broad convergence of views on enlargement of the Council, and the importance being given to measures to improve its working methods and procedures, to enhance its democratic and representative character, and to foster greater transparency.

We also recognize the important consultations which are proceeding in the other Working Groups. When this task is successfully completed, we envisage a United Nations restructured and re-energized, to accelerate economic and social development in a world where absolute poverty still afflicts over one billion people who exist on less than one dollar a day.

Commitment to reform notwithstanding, the capacity of the Organization to support this global agenda is being hampered by recurring financial crises. The United Nations now finds itself at the crossroads. In April 1996, the Secretary-General cautioned that the United Nations was on the brink of financial disaster. Regrettably, this outlook has not markedly improved to date. Given this prospect, it is clear that resolute action to address this crisis can no longer be postponed if the integrity of the Organization and the viability of its mandates are to be preserved. In our view, we have debated far too long obligations which are so clearly spelt out in the United Nations Charter.

Barbados holds firmly to the position advanced by the Group of 77 and China that the crisis derives essentially from the Organization's cash flow problem, created by the failure of major Member States to pay their contributions in full and on time. More generally, we support the principle of periodic review of the scale of assessments, designed to ensure the long-term financial viability of the United Nations, based on the principle of capacity to pay; but we do not believe that this should be linked conditionally to the issue of arrears as we search for a solution to the present crisis.

This Assembly will once again review the many unresolved problems which dominate the global political scene. The world still awaits the dawn of the new era of peace envisaged at the end of the cold war. As a small developing country, Barbados is ever conscious of the peaceful domestic climate it has enjoyed since independence in 1966, which has fostered its economic and social development. We therefore share the anguish of the international community for those countries where internal strife and regional conflict, and their attendant human suffering, continue to deny economic and social progress to millions of their people.

My delegation therefore welcomes the peace process which is being implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Dayton accords. Though still fragile, this Agreement, we think, offers the best prospects for peace so far, and we hope for an end to a conflict which has threatened the very credibility of the United Nations. We hope that the recent elections will be a further major step in the building of the confidence and trust so crucial to long-term reconciliation.

Recent outbreaks of violence in the Middle East have renewed our anxieties about peace in that region. The international community yearns for the day when a full and lasting peace is consolidated in this entire region, bringing to an end the long cycle of violence. We urge all the parties to re-embark on this journey and redouble their efforts to recapture the momentum of the peace process, which has so far brokered agreements between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and Palestine.

In Africa, a number of countries remain locked in prolonged conflict, which has smothered the democratic process and stalled the development effort. We urge the international community to do all it can to stem the explosive situation in the Great Lakes region. Without peace there can be no development, and without development there can be no lasting peace. We therefore hope for an early breakthrough for peace in affected countries, not only in Africa but also in other regions of the world, so that the urgent task of development can be resumed.

In our own hemisphere, the situation in Haiti continues to be of special concern to countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region. Thanks to the resolve of the Haitian people and the support of the international community, a viable political and development infrastructure has begun to take root. It holds the promise of nurturing the still-fragile democracy and accelerating economic and social progress which has eluded the majority of the Haitian people for too long. Speaking on behalf of member States of the Caribbean Community during consideration of this question at the fiftieth session, Barbados cautioned that the road ahead for Haiti would be long and difficult, that progress would be uneven, and that sustained support from the international community would continue to be crucial.

We believe that this view is still valid. My delegation therefore welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1063 (1996) of 28 June 1996, which established the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti until 30 November 1996. It will provide continuing support to secure and maintain a stable environment that will buttress the democratic and development process. However, come next month, the international community cannot wash its hands of Haiti, declare victory and leave. As recent events have shown, stability, to say nothing of democracy, remains a fragile sapling that will continue to require care and protection. We urge that Haitians, who were among the first in this hemisphere to attempt to define their own post-colonial political system, not be forgotten in the post-cold-war world.

Developing countries look to a reformed United Nations to play a major role in shaping the global society of the twenty-first century. It must build on the considerable policy consensus that already exists on the broad priorities of its agenda, including the link between peace and development, poverty eradication, sustainable development, social justice and democracy, issues of governance, and women. It must continue to nurture the participatory impulse of civil society, which has emerged as a major influence on the work of the Organization and on national public policy. It must propel this heightened concern with the human condition in all its dimensions to the top of the global agenda.

Barbados shares these priorities for full human development by fostering the empowerment of all its people as it expands its economic and social development. At the same time, it has taken steps to review and deepen its democratic and human rights traditions through the establishment of Commissions on Social Justice and Reform of the Constitution, respectively. These inquiries will assess the extent to which the promise of a good and just society has been fulfilled after 30 years of independence. They reflect the fact that we assign the highest priority to social policy and to the cause of human rights and democracy.

The United Nations faces many challenges, but these are not insurmountable if we renew our faith in its mission. Barbados believes that this Organization is still our best hope for fostering peace and social justice and for coordinating the management of global problems. Given the agenda before us, we believe this is a time for more, not less, intensive global cooperation — cooperation that only the United Nations can foster. We remain committed to its principles and will do our part to help fulfil the promise of the Charter.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa.

Shaikh Al-Khalifa (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I have the pleasure of extending to Mr. Razali Ismail and to his friendly country, Malaysia, my sincere congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. I wish him success in conducting the proceedings of the session and assure him of my delegation's readiness to cooperate fully with him in achieving our Organization's objectives and purposes.

I also take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his sincere efforts in guiding the proceedings of the previous session.

It is also my pleasure to express my country's gratitude and appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless and dedicated efforts to enhance the Organization's role and standing and to further the Charter's objectives, especially those related to the maintenance of world peace and security. I hope that he will continue to hold this important position and to do this good work.

This session convenes a year after the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which was celebrated in the middle of a decade that has, from the start, witnessed rapid changes and diverse trends arising from the remnants of the cooperation and cold-war conflict that have marked half a century.

The international community has dealt with the challenges this historic burden with a twofold response. First, it has sought to reform and develop the United Nations system so as to enable it to fulfil its role in the light of these changes. Secondly, it has made concerted efforts by convening world conferences to deal with critical issues relating to the future of mankind, such as the environment, development, population, trade, social development, women and children. Despite these efforts, which have continued for several years, this twofold response has proved woefully inadequate to alleviate the ills that have slowed the progress and political, economic and social development of the human race.

Given the way the United Nations was established and the manner in which the international system has evolved since the 1940s, this phenomenon should not come as a surprise. The international community has been unable to absorb the intense impact of the major transformations of the present decade, which have relied heavily on the foundations and parameters of the current system of international relations. This means that the international community still needs some time — not necessarily a little — in which to fathom the similarities and diversities of national interests that influence the contemporary international political system.

In order to be able to understand these political ramifications in their historical context, we must consider this phenomenon in the context of the flexibility and inflexibility that characterize the structure of the contemporary system of international relations. That is because the crisis afflicting current international political relations has been caused largely by the persistence of complex political and historical dilemmas that have continued to interact within a system of international relations based on visions formulated by the allies before the end of the Second World War.

The Powers that are influential in the international arena presently appear to be reviewing the basis on which the present international system was founded, with a view to reconfiguring, rather than abolishing, current and future global imperatives. The underlying purpose of the system that emerged in the 1940s was fundamentally to address regional and international security problems in all their political and economic dimensions. It is a fact that the Allied Powers formulated their vision in the 1940s on the premise that security and stability in the regional context were basically associated with the creation of a number of international institutions, most notably the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the financial institutions that came into being as a result of agreements reached at a number of historic conferences.

Despite this association and the new intellectual, political and economic trends brought about by the changes, the structural notions of the international system have not developed in tandem with the requirements of human development, as manifested by the communications revolution, the exchange of ideas, the flow of information and the technological applications that have influenced international relations in various ways.

The historical concept of the link between national and regional security could serve as an appropriate starting point for a comprehensive review and redefinition of the question of security in all its aspects. In spite of the importance of the administrative and financial reform of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other organs, the influential Powers have not given the question of collective security adequate attention with a view to developing ways and means to preserve international peace and security.

The international community truly must expand the scope of the principle of collective security if States are to be free from the fear of strategic threats to their national and regional security. It is my conviction that the Security Council, as the sensory nerve-centre of the United Nations, in addressing the questions of world security, should be guided by certain collective security principles that could be activated in the current circumstances. Furthermore, it is possible to increase the use of practical preventive diplomacy to prevent the eruption of conflicts by containment and by speedily eliminating their causes.

In view of the importance now being attached to the question of collective security, thought should be given to the development of mechanisms for maintaining relations between the Security Council and regional organizations, in accordance with United Nations purposes and principles. This is relevant to some particularly important regions of the world, such as the Arabian Gulf region, which is afflicted by tensions that threaten the established fundamentals of the region's security.

To insure the region's security and stability, it is imperative that relations among all States of the region be based on the principles of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of others and recognition of every State's national sovereignty. The territorial and border claims that are currently being made in the Arabian Gulf region, and are aimed at changing established and traditionally accepted boundaries, upset the security and stability of the region. We believe that the optimal and most judicious course for avoiding that prospect is to respect the *status quo*, refrain from any claims — total or partial — and to settle any consequential differences by peaceful means acceptable to the parties to the dispute.

With regard to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, the State of Bahrain, being keen to maintain security and stability in the Gulf region, stresses the need for Iraq to meet fully the requirements of international legality and fulfil its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the release of Kuwaiti and other prisoners of war.

While it asserts that care should be given to ensuring the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, Bahrain welcomes the signing of the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United Nations and calls for the accelerated implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) on the issue of "oil for food", an essential step towards alleviating the suffering of the brotherly Iraqi people.

On another matter, the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa — all of which belong to the United Arab Emirates — is a cause of concern for Bahrain and other member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, in view of the serious ramifications for the security and stability of the region and good-neighbourly relations among its States.

The State of Bahrain therefore calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond urgently to the appeals of the United Arab Emirates to solve the question of these islands through serious bilateral talks and other means available for the peaceful settlement of disputes through reconciliation among States.

Economic security is also fundamental to a world of security and peace. In recent years, significant developments have taken place in the sphere of international economic relations as a result of the interdependence that has come to characterize the world economy, especially since the establishment of the World Trade Organization. Over the past four decades, the United Nations has addressed development problems, issued a number of declarations and formulated a number of strategies in this respect, but the desired results have been elusive.

We believe that development challenges to any country can be met only by taking into account the global economic system as a solution that involves the development of a comprehensive framework combining international and local efforts, with a view to improving the performance of the economy in a favourable environment wherein local and regional circumstances and the priorities and special conditions of each individual State are taken into consideration.

The topic of the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held this year in South Africa, was the promotion of sustainable growth and development in the context of the globalization and liberalization of the world economy. This reflects a global interest in addressing the shortcomings of the world economy. In this connection, we would like to emphasize the importance of the role of the Organization in the enhancement of solidarity and interdependence for the sake of promoting development in all countries.

With regard to the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Istanbul this year, it is our hope that the principles, commitments and plan of action of the Conference will be implemented. It is also our hope that the World Food Summit, to be held in November in Rome, will make recommendations to ensure and enhance world food security.

Environmental problems continue to be a cause of concern for the human race in view of their potential threat to our planet. Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference of Environment and Development, is a framework for the protection of the environment. Persuaded that collective action is important for the protection of the environment, the State of Bahrain has paid special attention to the issue of the environment. Accordingly, an Emir's decree approving Bahrain's accession to the Convention on Biological Diversity and another on environmental law were issued. The latter establishes an environmental body that can exercise all authorities with respect to environmental planning and policies and the supervision of their implementation.

The third element, in our view, is social security, without which societies would be unable to sustain human progress or protect national security. As far as the people are concerned, it is an important precondition for the achievement and preservation of peace and security within and among States. This fact was stressed by the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen last year.

Responsibility for social development is based on two pivotal factors: national responsibility and collective commitment, as reflected in the combined efforts of the international community. In this connection, it must be mentioned that the ability of societies to effect social development is fundamentally connected to the objectives of economic progress and comprehensive development in all their human dimensions. Any international commitment to preserve the stability and security of societies within the framework of economic and social development should take into consideration the cultural content of social development and the various national factors.

The State of Bahrain — in the light of its conviction that peace in the region is a strategic alternative that must inevitably be based on justice, the restoration of rights and the prevalence of security — follows closely and with deep concern the new developments in the Middle East peace process. Peace is the only course that can lead to reconstruction, prosperity and the well-being of the peoples of the region. It can end the cycle of violence and war which the region has suffered for so long.

The progress achieved in the context of the Madrid Conference, whose underlying principles were the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in accordance with international legality and the principle of "land for peace", should continue without regression. We must build on it.

The State of Bahrain views with deep concern the serious events that have taken place in the past few days as a result of the policies of the present Israeli Government. These are manifest in its perpetuation of the occupation and its refusal to honour the agreements made and to withdraw from occupied Arab territories in Palestine, the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, as provided for in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), as well as in the Madrid terms of reference, whose underlying principle is "land for peace".

We call upon the international community, in particular the two sponsors of the peace process, and the States of the European Community to persuade Israel to end its repressive practices against the Palestinian people and to resume negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories in accordance with the agreements concluded between the two parties. They should also stress the necessity of resuming negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. These negotiations should aim at achieving just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region and at insuring the attainment by the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights. These include their right to establish their own independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan Heights up to the boundaries of 4 June 1967 and occupied southern Lebanon.

Without doubt, in violating the principles upon which the peace process is based, reneging on the agreements and commitments reached within the framework of this process and procrastinating in the implementation thereof, Israel will drastically set back the peace process and lead the region back into a new cycle of tension and violence.

It is regrettable that Israel continues periodically to act repressively against the Palestinian people and repeatedly to violate the sanctity of Islamic holy places. We denounce the Israeli authorities' opening of a tunnel beneath Islamic archaeological sites. This is calculated to judaize and efface the Islamic features of the occupied Palestinian territories. This act has caused indignation and anger in the occupied Palestinian territories in particular and in the Islamic world in general. It is a hostile act directed against the holy Islamic sites and a provocation against the sentiments of Arabs and Muslims.

In condemning Israeli practices and repressive actions, which have resulted in scores of deaths and hundreds of injuries, we demand that Israel end these practices and forswear its plans to change the Arab and Islamic character of the city of Jerusalem or to violate the sanctity of the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque. We call upon the international community to urge and pressure the Israeli Government to renounce political policies of expansion and settlement in Arab territories and to comply with the requirements of peace and security in the region.

We consider the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to be one of the most important issues in the field of disarmament. We look forward to the day when we can feel secure because all nuclear tests have been ended and all nuclear weapons eliminated. Bahrain therefore signed the Treaty last week because it considers it a step in the right direction of eliminating these weapons.

The elimination of all weapons of mass destruction is bound to enhance confidence and security at both the international and regional levels. We have supported the initiatives seeking to make the Middle East, including the Arabian Gulf region, a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Bahrain has done so in the deep conviction that the security and stability of the region should be maintained, that the region should be saved from the calamity of these weapons of mass destruction and that the States of the region should be able to implement development projects and raise the standard of living of their peoples. In this connection, I would like to applaud the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty in Cairo on 11 April 1996, which established Africa as a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

Terrorism in all forms is a global phenomenon whose threat today is not confined to a particular people or region, but endangers security and peace in numerous countries. Bahrain has repeatedly denounced and deplored this dangerous phenomenon in more than one international forum. Its eradication requires cooperation and the coordination of efforts. Bahrain now calls for concerted efforts for the implementation of the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, adopted at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. It also calls for cooperation in the identification of terrorist activities, their prosecution, the adoption of deterrent measures and preventing terrorist organizations from using the territories, information media and facilities available by virtue of the respect given to civil liberties in certain countries, in order to mount hostile activities against other countries.

The State of Bahrain would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to the sisterly and friendly States that lent their support at a time when it was the target of foreign-aided terrorist acts aimed at disturbing the security and stability enjoyed by our State and other Arabian Gulf States. The events witnessed in the State of Bahrain and other States in the region and throughout the world demonstrate the extent of the danger of terrorism and how far the terrorist elements can go in manipulating laws and international human-rights principles to serve their own subversive and terrorist ends.

The fighting in Somalia and Afghanistan has brought devastation and destruction to the peoples of the two countries. With a view to sparing the lives of innocent people, we appeal anew to all parties to the conflict in each of the two Islamic countries to embark on a serious dialogue to reach a political settlement of their differences.

We welcome the outcome of the elections that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the framework of the Peace Agreement signed in Paris as a result of negotiations held in Dayton in 1995.

We support all efforts to restore peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, urge respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country and emphasize the necessity of economic reconstruction and rehabilitation as a means to buttress the peace process.

With regard to the question of Cyprus, we call upon the United Nations to continue its contacts with the parties concerned so that direct talks can be resumed with a view to reaching a final settlement.

The question of the development and reform of the United Nations is in the forefront of issues that have captured the attention of Member States. Extensive discussions on this matter have taken place over the past few years, especially in relation to the question of equitable representation on the Security Council. It is our view that the reform of the Security Council is not only a matter of institutional dimensions and ramifications, but that it also constitutes a challenge that the international community should address thoughtfully.

The State of Bahrain has consistently supported the Security Council and its role in and contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. It has also joined the international community in the implementation of resolutions relevant to international legality and related commitments. Bahrain is the host country for the Field Office of the Special Commission established under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and has provided the Office with all the facilities needed for the successful performance of its duties. In this respect, the State of Bahrain wishes to recall with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, submitted to the General Assembly at its current session, in which he praises the support given by the Government of Bahrain to the activities and work of the Office.

Since it joined this Organization, the State of Bahrain has always adhered to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and therefore looks forward to playing a more active role in this regard. The nomination of Bahrain to Security Council membership for the period 1998-1999 — which received the unanimous endorsement of the Group of Asian States, the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council and the support of other Member States — is a confirmation of its standing as a peace-loving State and an indication that it wishes to play a more active role in the maintenance of world peace and security.

The characteristic distinction of the late twentieth century is that relations among nations are based on interrelated, mutual and diverse interests in various political, economic and social fields. This interrelatedness of interests has formed a sort of common culture among nations and has created a favourable climate for the exchange of ideas and the tools of knowledge, thus enabling cultural and intellectual interaction among peoples of the world and enhancing a deeper understanding of the bases of world peace and security, an objective which the United Nations has sought to achieve over the past five decades.

In view of this fact, it behooves us to lend the Organization support and encouragement so that it may be able to play its role in a civilized world and carry out its noble tasks of ensuring the achievement of world security, prosperity and peace.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr. Ablassé Ouédraogo.

Mr. Ouédraogo (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): Like some others present here, I too have had the opportunity to visit Malaysia. Malaysia is a great country, both in size and because of its outstanding successes in many areas. But it is a great country above all because of the quality of the women and men who govern it and who represent it on the international scene. Ambassador Razali Ismail is without doubt one of its most eminent representatives. I am therefore convinced that he will preside over the work of our 51-year-old Organization with great cheer and efficiency. I convey to him and to all the elected members of the Bureau my congratulations and best wishes for success.

I would also like to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, whose personal qualities and wealth of experience guided the work of the historic fiftieth session in an exemplary manner. We wish to convey our great gratitude to him.

Finally, I pay well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his outstanding efforts to strengthen the role of the United Nations and for the talent and tenacity with which he has guided the Organization in these difficult times.

In July 1996, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity adopted in Yaoundé, Cameroon, a declaration expressing its appreciation for and stressing the work done by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the helm of the United Nations. According to tradition and the rules of fairness, Africa is entitled to a second mandate, which we hope will come about.

The current trends on the international scene are disquieting. The sovereign equality of States and the principle of free trade are being damaged by unilateral measures, despite the fact that the General Assembly of the United Nations has reaffirmed these principles and the strict respect that should be accorded to them. Moreover, we are facing a financial crisis that is essentially caused by the default on payments of assessed contributions due to the Organization. The overwhelming majority of speakers who have preceded me have said that this practice is unacceptable, particularly on the part of those who have the capacity to pay.

The procedures and decision-making process of the Security Council are still fairly opaque, despite some minor openings. The geographical origins of the permanent members run counter to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The cause of this is historical, but this perception is now more widespread and stark, 51 years after the creation of the Organization. Yet today, through the deliberations and decisions of the Security Council, a veritable body of substantive international law, armed with sanctions and strewn with ad hoc tribunals, is emerging. After 51 years, the General Assembly, the pedestal and guarantor of this structure, finds itself stripped of its powers and even of its functions.

We cannot compare the General Assembly to the Security Council but recent developments in these two bodies have accentuated their differences instead of emphasizing their complementarity, which is not a healthy situation. Ironically, this situation coincides with the vehement, ongoing clamour for transparency and democracy everywhere. The reform of the United Nations system is understood in various ways and we have yet to find the formula that can be supported by everyone. Difficulties arise from the demands of some and the reluctance of others. Clearly, reform must be a joint effort or it will not come about. We are concerned because all of these combined factors might encourage the disturbing trends to which I referred earlier.

Indeed, the financial situation of the United Nations is central to the significance and future of our Organization. An institution, a community of men and women, can be created by force — can, for a time, be maintained by force — but it is not force that makes them last. The idea of leadership is based on the ability to take decisions as well as on moral authority. Moral authority is based on the ability to convince the majority in a lasting and complete way. To be followed without conviction is to run the risk of abandonment as soon as short cuts can be safely taken.

The joint aspiration of the States Members of the United Nations was, is and must remain that of following a common path beneficial to all. It is no coincidence that in the Charter, drafted at the end of a conflict in which Powers imposed themselves on other Powers, spirit and letter came together so that States large and small could feel involved as much in the responsibilities and decision-making as in the outcome. Hence the principle of the sovereign equality of States, who assumed that, regardless of their size or importance, each should participate to the best of its ability in the functioning of the Organization because, in this way, each worked equally to attain the principles and purposes of the Charter. Nor is it a coincidence that those which bore a greater burden in this respect were given a privilege in the Security Council, though it was to be exercised on behalf of all and for the benefit of all.

What is happening nowadays? The United Nations is unique. It is political. Its role and its objectives are very special. How can we, therefore, try to see it as a company whose shareholders want to move it in a particular direction on the basis of the number of shares they hold? How could we continue to call ourselves United Nations? The United Nations has charge over destinies and people. It is also an institution that must be managed, but one in which everyone has a place.

I have dwelt at length on this point because Burkina Faso is a community of men that understands, appreciates and supports the fact that the United Nations is irreplaceable. It is an instrument which has no equal and we desire a world of fraternity and progress.

Africa is fighting for its development, although beset by crises and conflicts, such as those in Liberia and Burundi. In Liberia, after the events of April 1996, the summit meeting of the Committee of Nine and a certain open-mindedness on the part of faction leaders calmed the situation, permitted the nomination of a new Head of State in the person of Ms. Ruth Perry, opened up prospects for the holding of elections. We encourage this trend.

In Burundi, a military *coup d'état* swept away civilian rule, but the fraternal States of the subregion rejected *fait accompli* by ordering sanctions. We are therefore concerned by the situation in that country, which has already been traumatized by numerous ethnic conflicts. The international community should pay heed to that and provide resources.

Turning to the subject of Taiwan, Burkina Faso would refer to the principle of universality in the matter of representation of 22 million people. We hope that an ad hoc committee will be established.

Poverty is on the rise. It is the result of the policies of the countries that control the markets. Poverty is also the consequence of unequal distribution among the developing countries. In all cases, statements on both sides very often sound like incantations crashing against the wall of cold implacable reality. The idea of globalization, paradoxically, goes hand in hand with that of fragmentation, both political and economic. The world conferences held over the past six years have promoted the concept of partnership. We still need to give that concept real content and weight. Unfortunately, we still possess neither of these despite real efforts by some partners of the North. Invective, tirades of complaint and exhortations have not advanced the debate nor brought us closer to the right solutions.

From 16 to 20 September 1996, we held the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. We thank Ambassador Owada and his country, Japan, for their interest in the development of Africa. However, we must acknowledge that the results of our negotiations with our other partners continue to fall short of our expectations, needs and priorities, although Africa has largely met its commitments. The same goes for the mid-term review undertaken by the United Nations Children's Fund on the outcome of the World Summit for Children. Increased resources are necessary and expected.

Self-control is the beginning of wisdom, but it is not enough without an enabling environment. From the discussions in the Uruguay Round to the creation of the World Trade Organization, this point is constantly being borne out. Solidarity, the key word, must prevail and guide our actions if we want a global village, not just a series of enclaves that are more or less fortunate and in the long run condemned to mutual destruction.

Multilaterlism could prevent that fate, especially since we are now seeing that the State is surrendering control over certain elements of its sovereignty. Everywhere, structures and organizations with varying degrees of legality are transcending States and establishing transnational networks and relations. It is therefore imperative that we keep pace with these trends and adapt now and in the future our special instrument, our common instrument: the United Nations at the service of peoples. Political will is what will make the difference.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations

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General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

21st plenary meeting

Thursday, 3 October 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, His Excellency Mr. Pavol Hamžík.

Mr. Hamžík (Slovakia): I would like to express my sincere congratulations, Sir, on your election to the presidency, and my best wishes for success in the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

I wish also to thank your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his leadership and his personal contribution to the positive achievements of last year's session.

Last year we commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. That was a good opportunity not only for historical reflection and drawing lessons from the past, but also for setting out new priorities and tasks for the years to come. It is obvious that the United Nations, if it is to meet expectations, has to adapt itself to meet new challenges. Slovakia supports all efforts that will contribute to the enhancement of democracy, transparency and efficiency in the work of the United Nations.

The need for the reform of the United Nations is also confirmed by its current difficult financial situation. This state of affairs can be resolved only if all Member States meet their financial obligations in a timely manner and pay their arrears, and if a new formula for determining a more adequate scale of assessments based on a country's capacity to pay is adopted. In this context, Slovakia appreciates the European Union proposal for the financial reform of the United Nations and welcomes an open and pragmatic discussion in this regard.

Let me stress that Slovakia, which has paid its contributions to the United Nations regular budget in full and on time, is also ready to bear its fair share of responsibilities in financing United Nations peace-keeping operations. Now, more than three years after our admission to United Nations membership, it is high time Slovakia was fairly allocated to an appropriate group for the financing of United Nations peace-keeping. Bearing in mind the available economic data and comparing them with those of several other countries of the Central European region, we are fully convinced that Slovakia should be allocated to Group C, and we see no compelling reason for further postponing this decision. Of course, such a decision would be without prejudice to a comprehensive review process of the method to be applied for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peace-keeping operations. But the contributions of any Member State for 1993-1997 should be assessed only on the basis of the scheme applicable in that period.

In the context of United Nations institutional reform, great attention is focused on the Security Council. Slovakia supports Security Council reform and is of the opinion that the expansion of its membership should

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reflect the principle of equitable geographical representation. The membership of the Group of Eastern European States has recently more than doubled, and this fact should be duly taken into account in the Security Council reform process. Countries able to bear global responsibility should be granted the status they deserve in the Security Council. On the other hand, expansion of the membership should hamper neither the efficiency nor the decision-making process of the Security Council, so the increase should be a rather limited one.

Several inspiring proposals have been submitted to the United Nations. Slovakia is of the opinion that we should look for the positive elements contained in those proposals and make maximum efforts aimed at reaching a generally acceptable solution. Practice has shown that an increased role for small and medium-sized countries in the Security Council can contribute favourably to the effective implementation of its decisions, thus improving the authority and the democratic character of that body.

Slovakia actively supports the United Nations efforts to maintain and strengthen international peace and security. After three years of difficult negotiations, the Slovak Republic has finally become a full-fledged member of the Conference on Disarmament, thus filling the vacancy caused by the dissolution of the former Czechoslovakia.

Slovakia, as a country using nuclear power solely for peaceful purposes, unequivocally supports all steps which prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and create conditions for their eventual elimination. Therefore, we welcomed last year's decision of the fifth Review Conference to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This September we voted for the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Last Monday I had the honour to sign it on behalf of the Slovak Republic. We hope that it will soon enter into force and become law in international relations, thus making the world safer.

The world community is also paying close attention to another important disarmament agreement — namely, the Chemical Weapons Convention. Slovakia has already ratified this important instrument and supports a speedy resumption of the ratification process so that it can enter into force.

We consider the problem posed by anti-personnel landmines a serious one. We therefore welcome initiatives aimed at a ban on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of this kind of weapon. For our part, we have already unilaterally declared a moratorium on the export of these devices, which cause casualties mostly among the innocent civilian population.

Peace-keeping operations continue to be a major part of United Nations activities. Slovakia sees their further development through the enhancement of elements of preventive diplomacy, with a significant strengthening of their humanitarian dimension and a broader incorporation of civilian components at all stages. Practical evidence of Slovakia's efforts to implement the basic United Nations goals is our participation in the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) and the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

Slovakia, as a troop-contributing country, understands the significance of appropriate protection for United Nations personnel. Therefore, we have already ratified the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The brave men and women in blue helmets deserve stronger protection. We call upon all other States which have not yet become parties to the Convention to ratify it as soon as possible.

The European continent was the theatre of two world wars in the past. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to pay great attention to the issues of security and peace in this part of the world. Underestimating the gravity of the situation caused an immense human tragedy for millions of innocent people in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The Dayton Agreements, and above all their successful implementation, represent a turning point towards a peaceful settlement of this traumatic conflict, not only for its direct participants but also in a global context. The international community also plays an irreplaceable role in this process through United Nations mechanisms. Slovakia is ready to get fully involved in the reconstruction of the destroyed economies of the countries of the region. We welcome Security Council resolution 1074 (1996), adopted just two days ago.

Maintaining peace and security in other parts of the world is of no lesser importance. Preserving the continuity of the peace process in the Middle East is an important part of that. We must not allow the peace process to end and the results achieved so far to be destroyed.

We observe with concern the growth of instability and the spread of conflicts on the African continent. Slovakia supports all efforts by the United Nations, the

Organization of African Unity and other organizations involved in the search for peaceful solutions for eliminating crises and violence.

Slovakia supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to achieve a durable solution to the question of Cyprus that will guarantee respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the country, in compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. My country is prepared to continue its mission of good offices by organizing meetings of the political party leaders of both Cypriot communities.

As far as humanitarian assistance is concerned, we emphasize the need for the efficient mutual cooperation of all involved entities, together with a strengthening of the coordinating role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Early warning as one element of preventive diplomacy and the rapid reaction of the international community in response to an emerging crisis situation are factors which significantly affect overall results. The role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in the reconstruction of territories suffering from military conflicts, including in demining, is important.

International conflicts and internal strife are not the only threats to international security and the stability of States. Increasingly, acts of terrorism and organized transnational criminal activities undermine democratic societies and become their joint enemies. We strongly support international cooperation aimed at their suppression and elimination. We will study with interest several timely initiatives put forward during this General Assembly session, such as the initiatives of Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States. We are convinced that granting observer status to INTERPOL in the General Assembly will have a positive impact on the activities of both organizations in this field and will enable closer cooperation.

Human rights will undoubtedly continue to be high on the United Nations agenda. Full respect for human rights is a prerequisite for freedom, justice, stability and peace. We commend the efforts to increase the efficiency of the United Nations human rights programmes, the work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and his policy goal of transforming the Centre for Human Rights into an overall coordinator of human rights policy and action within the United Nations system.

In less than four years of statehood, Slovakia has established a system of democratic institutions. All commitments under the relevant human rights instruments have been incorporated into its legislation. Our country respects the rule of law and guarantees all citizens within its jurisdiction respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including for the individual rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic minorities.

We have established an inter-ministerial coordinating committee for women's issues as an advisory body to the Slovak Government. It is designed to initiate and monitor the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Family issues are very closely interlinked with the rights of women and the rights of the child. In today's world, the family requires better protection and promotion. A strong family is a basis for a sound society. An international centre for family studies has been established in the Slovak capital. We are interested in signing a memorandum of understanding between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the United Nations on the promotion of family issues through the Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies and the United Nations.

Sustainable economic and social development is a *sine qua non* for full enjoyment of human rights and the decent life of mankind on all parts of the globe. We welcome the new, integrated and comprehensive focus of the United Nations on these issues, as reflected in the series of United Nations conferences and summits held during the term of office of the current Secretary-General. He deserves his share of credit for their success. Now and in the years to come, we have to concentrate on the implementation and review of the recommendations, conclusions and plans of actions adopted in Rio, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing and Istanbul. We consider the convening of a special session of the General Assembly in 1997 to review the implementation of Agenda 21 a timely course of action. As a new member of the Commission on Sustainable Development we will pay special attention to these activities.

The Economic and Social Council should play a key role in fostering international activities for sustainable economic and social development; its coordinating role is needed. We support efforts to enhance the efficiency of the Economic and Social Council and to streamline its procedures. Its sessions should be more focused on topical issues. The relationship with its functional committees requires further reflection and improvements. Unnecessary duplication in the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should be avoided. The consideration of economic issues in the Second Committee and social ones in the Third Committee seems nowadays an increasingly artificial separation. As these issues are interlinked, it would only benefit us to find a proper remedy for this artificial separation. This may require a new redistribution of responsibilities among the Main Committees.

A close interconnection between environmental issues and economic development is reflected in the process of economic transformation in Slovakia. Economic development in Slovakia has reached a new level, and the foundations for the transition to a market economy are now firmly laid. This can be seen in the positive economic results achieved in 1995, when Slovakia ranked second among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with a real annual gross domestic product growth of 7.4 per cent.

The Slovak economy is closely linked with the development of regional and world economies. As a founding country of the World Trade Organization, Slovakia is actively participating in the ongoing integration process and the formation of a new trade system on the regional and multilateral levels. In this context, the cooperation of the Central European Free Trade Agreement countries may be an example worth following in the integration of countries into the multilateral trade system and global economy. We see the Central European Free Trade Agreement not only as a vehicle to promote trade between its partners, but also as a step on the road to full integration into the European Union in the future, which is one of our foreign-policy priorities, together with membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

We welcome the positive results of the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which stressed the need for the improvement of cooperation with the WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions. The reform of its intergovernmental structure, the focus on a smaller number of priorities with a view to integrating developing countries into the international trade system, should lead to a renewal of the status of UNCTAD in the global economy.

The forthcoming Ministerial Meeting of the WTO in Singapore will be a good opportunity to further strengthen the Organization's regulatory role. Slovakia also places particular importance on cooperation with other United Nations agencies. We are interested in actively contributing to the improvement of their functioning.

I am convinced that the United Nations will prove its viability in the future, as it has so far, and confirm its unique role in the community of nations. The Slovak Republic is prepared to do its utmost for this goal.

The President: The next speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, His Excellency the Honourable Danny Philip.

Mr. Philip (Solomon Islands): As we begin the second half of the United Nations first century, we are presided over by a diplomat whose distinguished career has included service in four of the world's five great regions. He has demonstrated skill and ready humour in his work as the Permanent Representative of Malaysia. I note with some amazement his most recent achievement: getting this Assembly to begin each meeting promptly on schedule. This bodes well for our efforts here.

Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal presided over the fiftieth session of the General Assembly with the intellect and distinction characteristic of his career as a parliamentarian and teacher of law. We are in his debt.

Last year, I saluted the Secretary-General, as well as the women and men of the Secretariat, the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations for their extraordinary work during this difficult time in the Organization's history. The Solomon Islands applauds them all. It is difficult to persevere in the face of harsh and unjustified criticism and insufficient financial resources while engaged in the complex task of revitalizing the United Nations to meet the needs of a world in rapid transformation.

This morning, on behalf of the Solomon Islands, I signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). I was especially pleased to do so because nuclear-weapons testing and disarmament are critical issues for the people of my country. During the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, the Solomon Islands worked with its sister States of the South Pacific Forum and the Pacific basin for the adoption of resolution 50/70 A on nuclear testing. Noting the international alarm over recent nuclear tests and the potential negative effects of underground nuclear testing on health and the environment, the General Assembly deplored all nuclear testing and called for its immediate cessation.

The islands and atolls of the Pacific Ocean were the sites of nuclear tests for 50 years. Peoples were displaced and fragile environments destroyed. We welcome the end of the nuclear-weapons tests, but when will the States who conducted them accept their responsibility for providing long-term damage assessments and aid for resettlement and the restoration of economic productivity?

Solomon Islands also welcomes the signature of Tonga, as well as the signature and ratification by the Republic of Vanuatu, of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the signing of its Protocols by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Last November, the judges of the International Court of Justice heard two weeks of argument to assist them in rendering the Advisory Opinion requested by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session on the question: Is the threat or use of nuclear weapons in any circumstances permitted under international law? The Solomon Islands worked closely with the Marshall Islands and Western Samoa in developing and presenting to the Court, in cooperation with other States, the case that the use of even the smallest nuclear weapon would violate international law, particularly humanitarian law. The landmark Opinion rendered by the Court on 8 July largely supported our position. Regrettably, the nuclear Powers that argued against us at the International Court of Justice see it otherwise. We look forward to the debate on the Advisory Opinion, which is on the agenda thanks to the initiative of Malaysia.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the creation of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in Africa and South-East Asia, the finding of the International Court of Justice, the General Assembly's adoption of the CTBT — whatever its shortcomings — and the report of the Canberra Commission indicate that a momentum exists for establishing targets and timetables for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. Although the majority of States support this, such States have no forum in which they can develop their ideas and formulate a strategy. Solomon Islands proposes the creation of a forum of non-nuclear-weapon States. Committed to the elimination of nuclear weapons, the forum would seek agreement on a unified approach to the full implementation of article VI of the NPT and monitor progress towards that end. Moreover, the forum would work to give effect to arrangements such as the southern hemisphere nuclear-weapon-free zone and linked regional nuclear-weapon-free zones that could evolve into a global nuclear-weapon-free system.

Solomon Islands endorses the statement made here last week by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Marshall Islands on behalf of the South Pacific Forum. Solomon Islands, a member of the South Pacific Forum ministerial committee on New Caledonia, welcomes the progress facilitated by France and the relevant parties in implementing the Matignon Accords.

For the small island States of the Pacific, the environment, development and international trade are matters of critical concern. The development of comprehensive arrangements for the sustainable management of our region's fisheries is urgently needed. Solomon Islands will soon sign and ratify the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

The special session of the General Assembly to be convened in 1997 to review Agenda 21 is also of great importance to Solomon Islands. We seek practical ways to improve ongoing regional efforts to meet the Agenda's goals.

The second assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is a call to the international community to speed up negotiations, recognizing that such a global problem demands a collective solution. Solomon Islands continues to support the Alliance of Small Island States Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. If lower greenhouse gas emissions are not achieved soon, the very survival of small island developing States will be threatened. Moreover, the sustainable management and conservation of our forests are essential for the biological diversity and economy of the country.

In the Pacific, where healthy coral reefs are essential for effective coastal zone management, we are collaborating in the international coral reef initiative and will take part in our region's Year of the Coral Reef in 1997. As valuable as these efforts are, what remains to be done is formidable. The recent report to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development on activities to implement the Barbados Programme of Action in the Pacific region shows the range and magnitude of the problems the citizens of the small island developing States face.

The future of the Solomon Islands must depend on a people-centred development strategy that uses a bottom-up and top-down process of decision-making. With a population of fewer than 400,000 people of diverse ethnic and linguistic origins, 80 per cent of whom live in rural settings on hundreds of islands arrayed over 1,600 kilometres of ocean, no other system is workable. A major change in our system of provincial government is designed to maximize rural community participation in planning and decision-making. Overseas development assistance could, therefore, be directed to where it is most needed. We are fostering public health, literacy and electrification. That is why the recent completion of our first solar-powered village is important for us. In implementing the Habitat Agenda, we are encouraging self-reliance in village development. Solar and other renewable energy resources, such as water and wind, will further our economic, education and health development plans.

Several weeks ago, the Internet reached the Solomon Islands. Personal computers in a growing number of our secondary schools and the possibility of lap-top computers in the hands of teachers and students give new hope for my country's future. We are now using the World Wide Web to introduce the country to potential investors and tourists.

Peace in our region is essential for sustainable development. Solomon Islands encourages the efforts of Papua New Guinea to resolve its Bougainville crisis through constructive dialogue with all the parties concerned. The confidence-building measures have reduced the tension across the border between Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

Solomon Islands, which patiently follows the debates on reforming the United Nations, recognizes the difficulties inherent in making the Organization more effective. We support an increase in the non-permanent membership of the Security Council on a regional basis and thank Italy for its valuable proposal. If the number of permanent members is also to be enlarged, the responsibilities of permanent membership and the criteria for the use of the veto must be established and made transparent.

The fiftieth anniversary Declaration called for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, the universal organ of the States Members of the United Nations. Proposals have been put forward and debated. Calls for reducing the length of the agenda continue to echo through these halls. Yet, in the past few weeks, we have seen how vital the General Assembly can become when a delegation skilfully and vigorously presses forward with a great issue and effectively marshals the support of many Member States. I refer to the extraordinary work of Ambassador Richard Butler and his Australian colleagues in mobilizing overwhelming support for the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). When the will and commitment are present, the General Assembly can act with brilliant effectiveness, winning the applause of a world hungry for security, peace and prosperity.

Such an achievement need not be rare. As the universal organ of the Member States, the General Assembly should be a force for democracy, transparency and universality. For example, the Charter permits the General Assembly a much larger role in the selection of the Secretary-General than it has exercised in the past. Confronted as we are with public action in this matter by one of the great Powers, should we not now seek to make the process truly democratic and open? Can we afford to leave this essential issue to last-minute bargaining behind closed doors? Twenty-five years ago, the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session adopted resolution 2837 (XXVI), which recognized the unquestionable value of the general debate and said that it should continue to be held every year and that the time devoted to it should be utilized to the maximum.

The general debate offers a glimpse of how Member States see the state of the world and the United Nations. Listening to the statements in this great Hall, one is struck by the spectrum of ideas and opinions they present. Discussion would enhance their value for us, but we have not established appropriate venues at which the views offered here could be thoroughly explored. Can we afford to deny ourselves the benefit of engaging our colleagues intellectually?

To move the General Assembly towards universality, Solomon Islands believes that substantially reducing the floor rate in the scale of assessments, as has been proposed, would not only enable several countries in our region to seek membership of the United Nations but would help many developing countries to pay their annual assessments in full and on time.

Two themes have clearly emerged in our general debate: Whatever its weaknesses, the United Nations is indispensable; but without sufficient resources and a decisive commitment to true multilateralism, the

Organization cannot fulfil its obligations to the peoples of the world. Solomon Islands and the other small island developing States need this Organization. Whether the issue is investment, law enforcement, trade embargoes, fishing rights, hazardous waste dumping, natural disasters, autonomy, independence or any combination of these, the people of the small islands turn to the United Nations for support.

We and others spoke out on behalf of the Republic of China on Taiwan, which, barred from the United Nations and seeking unification with the People's Republic of China, is attempting to enlarge its contribution to the developing world through this Organization. Solomon Islands hopes that unification negotiations based on the proposals each party has put forward can begin in the near future.

The United Nations is dealing with important issues: the Agenda for Development, the programmes of action approved at the world conferences, technical assistance, the Secretary-General's preventive diplomacy, the evolving international system for protecting human rights. In this respect Solomon Islands especially thanks the International Committee of the Red Cross for its efforts to rid the world of anti-personnel landmines and for its work caring for the displaced and searching for missing persons, including Kuwaitis and Greek Cypriots who have still not been heard from, and many other people who have "disappeared".

These are life and death matters even for those of us who live on distant islands. Through a commitment to equity, democracy and tolerance based on multilateralism and universality, an effective United Nations will serve us all for generations to come.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Mr. László Kovács.

Mr. Kovács (Hungary): May I, at the outset, extend the congratulations of my delegation to you, Sir, upon your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. In your endeavours, based on your rich diplomatic experience, you may count on the assistance and support of the Hungarian delegation.

Let me also pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his extremely able leadership throughout our historic fiftieth session.

The diversity of challenges facing the community of nations, the difficulties associated with finding proper responses and the importance of building up supportive national and international constituencies are hardly likely to send multilateralism into oblivion. Yet, in this time of change, and despite the forceful tendencies of globalization, interdependence and integration, no single applicable approach is at hand for political leaders. Given its unique role and capacities, the United Nations can be the principal vehicle by which the international community selects and addresses problems requiring a universal response.

This Organization, however, cannot and should not micro-manage the solution to all the urgent problems of our contemporary world. Times have changed and so must the United Nations. In several instances, the international community may act much more efficiently through regional organizations or specialized agencies. What is essential, however, is that the nations forming this Organization stand up with one strong voice when the purposes and principles of the Charter are put to the test. Violations of international law, human rights and fundamental freedoms should be matched with legitimate and adequate responses by the international community, acting through the United Nations.

The issue of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation remains a legitimate concern for the United Nations. Last year, we were pleased by the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This important step not only constituted a major building block in the complex web of our non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, but served as a catalyst to forge consensus around the future direction and dynamics of this process. As a result of sustained and responsible work in the Conference on Disarmament, it became possible to finalize the text of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Hungary stood fully behind this compromise text, which captures the diversity of views and approaches while still constituting a coherent and forward-looking document.

Opening the Treaty for signature was, indeed, a landmark. Hungary was among the first countries to sponsor resolution 50/245. I signed the Treaty on the day after it was opened for signature. This Treaty is not the end of the process. There is a need for further systematic and progressive efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and the CTBT must be given its due place in that process. In this context, we join those who call for its smooth entry into force, thereby allowing the disarmament process to proceed.

Hungary also consistently seeks to contribute to the strengthening of stability and security through cooperative efforts at both regional and bilateral levels. Building upon our intensified relations with the European Union, we look forward to the early beginning of negotiations on our accession to the European Union. We hold the firm view that the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will expand stability and security in Europe and will strengthen trans-Atlantic partnership and solidarity. Hungary, in its bilateral relations with neighbouring countries, is striving to contribute to the establishment of conditions enabling them all to be full partners in the institutions of Euro-Atlantic integration. We remain convinced that, with an enlarged NATO and an expanded European Union, the United Nations will have even more efficient and helpful regional partners.

The crisis in the Balkans has proved to be a painful and dramatic litmus test of the resolve of the international community. The United Nations has also had to draw its own conclusions from the tragedy. The mission of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium is currently making progress on the road to the peaceful reintegration of the region into Croatia, while securing respect for the human rights of all its inhabitants and the rights of national minorities in the region. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the role and determination of the Implementation Force (IFOR) is indispensable for guaranteeing the implementation of the Dayton Agreement. The cooperation, through IFOR, between NATO, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe in responding to the different facets of this major challenge is an innovative paradigm for future conflict resolution and crisis-management efforts.

We strongly believe that a solid international presence is required to allow democracy and stability to take firm root in the region. Hungary continues to provide the necessary logistical and transit facilities to IFOR forces and United Nations peace-keepers and is contributing to the strength of both IFOR and the United Nations International Police Task Force. The return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons — including those who found shelter in Hungary — pose a continuing challenge to the international community. The establishment of democracy and the rule of law should be accompanied by reconstruction and rehabilitation, thereby facilitating the conditions of safe and orderly return. Citizens should be assisted by the international community in their efforts to create and activate democratic institutions in which good governance and accountability will force war criminals out of the political mainstream. We see the work of the Tribunal in The Hague as an essential component of the Dayton peace process and the cooperation extended to it as an important indicator of the willingness of the parties to follow through on both their Dayton commitments and their obligations under the Charter.

Experience of the recently held elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina suggests that keeping to the schedule agreed at Dayton was a sound decision. We remain concerned, however, at the ethnically divided voting results. This only highlights the urgency of proceeding without undue delay to the building-up of a unique institutional infrastructure for the country and of facilitating the holding of municipal elections in a more stable political environment.

We are now in a period of reflection with regard to United Nations conflict-prevention and crisis-management capabilities. In our view, the United Nations, as it continues to live up to its responsibilities under the Charter, ought to craft its response strategies more carefully. The preventive capacity of the United Nations should be further strengthened. A sound early warning system, combining political, military, humanitarian, human rights and economic areas, would broaden the base of options and enhance the chances for success in the early detection of conflict situations. An early international monitoring presence in itself has a major deterrent effect. In-depth information on a given situation would catalyse diplomatic efforts and help trigger a broad consensus on the course of action.

Mr. Turnquest (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Specialized agencies and regional organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, are of primary importance in defusing sources of tension through creating appropriate and efficient response mechanisms. The United Nations, while fully discharging its responsibilities under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, can authorize and thus give legitimacy to these endeavours as well as to actions to be taken by ad hoc coalitions of the able and willing. The building-up of regional peacekeeping and peace-building capacities, as well as the increase of the operational character of some key activities of specialized agencies, are among the avenues that have to be more fully explored.

The reform agenda of the United Nations has been put in motion against the background of these new challenges and opportunities. Despite considerable progress in identifying the main areas of change within the different negotiating structures, we are seriously concerned that the overall reform process has lost most of its dynamics. While we should not allow that individual consensual elements of the reform process be held hostage to progress in unrelated issues, there seems to be an evident need to reach a political agreement, at least on the basic philosophy of the major premises of the reform agenda. Hungary is aware of the difficulties that make real progress so hard to achieve. It stands ready to help reinvigorate the momentum for change and to make genuine United Nations reform an early reality.

Promotion of the international protection of human rights is a fundamental component of my Government's foreign policy and one of the essential tasks conferred upon the United Nations by its founders. Despite the remarkable results achieved in the standard establishment and building-up of implementation machinery, there is still much to do in maintaining our determination to act in defence of human rights, wherever abuses may occur. Chronic underfunding, lack of efficient coordination and the sometimes evasive or uncooperative attitude of several Governments only underline this urgency, which was finally recognized when human rights were made one of the programme priorities of the United Nations. In our view, the United Nations, despite the important advances made, such as the establishment of the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights, is still not sufficiently equipped to deal with the latest and gravest of human-rights challenges: those emanating from ethnic conflict, civil strife, government breakdown and the collapse of the rule of law.

The importance of safeguarding and monitoring the observance of the rights of national or ethnic minorities is still too often disregarded and put in the context of political expediency. Lack of full respect for the rights of minorities, together with the absence of necessary political, legal, institutional and administrative guarantees, are among the root causes of many of the conflicts on our agenda.

Today, as we witness the growing importance of human-rights operational activities, the timeliness of the concept of preventive peace-building comes to mind. This implies not only an enhanced human-rights preventive and monitoring capacity of the United Nations, but also the right combination and use of the assets at our disposal, from early warning to preventive protection. The practice of financing some United Nations human-rights field operations from the peace-keeping budget and a greater coordinating role for the High Commissioner for Human Rights may be two of the avenues which deserve our full attention.

I wish to underline the fact that the way in which the United Nations tackles the crucial global problems mankind is facing will greatly determine the quality of the imminent next century. Let me refer, in this context, to the importance of some of the problems on the agenda of this session. Sustained efforts to combat international terrorism, transnational crime or illicit drug trafficking are required from all of us in order to preserve the international legal order, the present achievements and further potential of democracy and development. The United Nations has an important role in coordinating efforts to ensure that those involved in terrorist activities find no safe haven and expect a vigorous response from the international community. Transboundary criminal activity and drug-related money-laundering require the strict application of the law by strong, independent judiciaries. Our task is to make use of the advantages of multilateral cooperation in this field.

The Republic of Hungary stands ready to work in partnership with Member States to promote efficient multilateral action and to translate into deeds the noble ideals set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, His Excellency Chief Tom Ikimi.

Chief Ikimi (Nigeria): On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I convey to Mr. Razali Ismail our congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. His election is a recognition of his wide-ranging experience, candour and diplomatic skills. It is also a tribute to his great country. We are confident that, under his presidency, the work of the General Assembly will be highly successful.

May I also convey the appreciation of my delegation to his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas Do Amaral of Portugal, for the admirable manner and great sense of commitment with which he conducted the affairs of the fiftieth session of the Assembly. Nigeria also commends Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for the energy, sense of purpose and direction which he has brought to bear on the office of the Secretary-General in the meritorious service of our Organization.

When we met last year to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we observed that a number of developments on the political and economic scene had affected relations between States and modified the configuration of power at the global level. We recognized that the United Nations continues to be a viable instrument for the conduct of relations amongst States. We rededicated ourselves to the principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter, including, in particular, the promotion of social and economic development and the maintenance of international peace and security. In this endeavour, the United Nations has a central role to play. Member States, in line with their obligations under the Charter, have a duty to assist the United Nations in carrying out this responsibility. This requires the political commitment of all Member States and in particular of those upon which the Charter confers special status.

Some of the developments which have occurred on the international scene include the globalization of the world economy, the upsurge in market economies, the rise in economic growth in a number of countries and the growing trend towards political pluralism and democratization. However, new forms of conflict, new nationalisms, terrorism, an increasing incidence of poverty and global social decline have cast a sombre shadow on international peace and security, as well as on economic growth and development. The growing incidents of conflict, whether in Europe, in Africa or in the Middle East, and the slow pace of their resolution, are helping to exacerbate international tension and undermine confidence among States. The United Nations has a duty in this regard to redefine its role and sharpen its peacemaking and peacekeeping tools in order to effectively address them.

Peace is indivisible. The burden of peace, therefore, should be shared by all in a mode of global responsibility and partnership. Let me add also that the maintenance of international peace and security is not an exclusive responsibility of the United Nations. Regional and subregional arrangements have important roles to play and have demonstrated their commitment.

Although many regions of the world are now witnessing one form of conflict or another, with varying degrees of implications for the United Nations system, no region perhaps is more afflicted by this menace than Africa, both in the number of conflicts currently raging and in their unimaginable negative effects on the people. The individual and collective efforts of African States to achieve socio-political transformation have been threatened by these conflicts. In spite of this, the States of Africa have continued to make concerted efforts at regional and subregional levels to address this situation. The unique role being played by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution is important and should be supported by the international community. Nigeria welcomes the cooperation between the OAU and other regional organizations and the United Nations in the field of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacemaking.

In our own subregion, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) undertook an unprecedented initiative in crisis management by establishing a peacekeeping force, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), in Liberia six years ago. In spite of the difficulties we have encountered in the process, we remain committed in our endeavour to help the Liberian process reach its logical conclusion. In this regard, Nigeria shares the view of many observers who have described the revised Abuja peace agreement of August 1996 as providing the best legal framework for the resolution of the Liberian crisis. I am pleased to report that the implementation of the Agreement revised at Abuja last August is now on course. A new Council of State, headed by Mrs. Ruth Perry, has been installed. Since her installation, Mrs. Perry has enjoyed the considerable confidence of the other members of the Liberian National Transitional Government and indeed of most Liberians. I take this opportunity to appeal to all Liberians to extend cooperation to the new leadership in the interest of peace in their country. Let me assure the Assembly that it is the determination of my Head of State, General Sani Abacha, Chairman of ECOWAS — in collaboration with other leaders in our region and with the support of the international community as a whole — to ensure the resolution of the Liberian crisis.

It is our expectation that the Liberians themselves will assume their destiny in favour of peace, national reconciliation and national reconstruction. We therefore renew our appeal to the international community to provide much-needed financial, material and logistic support to enable ECOMOG and the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to effectively discharge their respective mandates. Meanwhile, we acknowledge with appreciation the renewed cooperation and assistance with the ECOWAS effort of some of the members of the international community.

Of great importance to the search for peace in the various troubled spots of the world is the urgent need to control the instruments of war. It is a matter of deep regret that the end of the cold war has not ushered in in its wake any appreciable reduction in the global arms build-up. As the arms build-up and the proliferation of conflicts are mutually reinforcing, there is an urgent need for the international community to contain the trend. The threat posed by existing stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and conventional armaments is yet to be removed.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), a priority item on the disarmament agenda of the United Nations, has been adopted. In spite of the imperfections of this Treaty, the Nigerian Government was able to support it and will be signing it in due course. Its adoption, which puts an end to the further qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and arsenals, represents a significant first step towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. It is our expectation that the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, will now take the next logical step to negotiate such disarmament within a time-bound framework. The nuclear-weapon States have a clear responsibility and duty to cooperate with the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate such a treaty.

The adoption of the Treaty of Pelindaba creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa has been an important contribution to confidence building in Africa, in addition to being a collateral disarmament measure. In view of the overwhelming support enjoyed by the Treaty beyond the African continent, it is recommended that other regions undertake similar efforts by establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones or zones of peace. While it is commendable to observe that the majority of nuclear-weapon States have since signed the protocol to the Treaty, we take this opportunity to urge other States that have not yet done so to do so, in order that the full objectives of the Treaty can be achieved.

Peace and development are mutually reinforcing. A just and enduring peace can only be founded on the general welfare and socio-economic progress of all peoples and all nations. It is indeed disconcerting to note that while the countries of the North are becoming more affluent, the countries of the South, which contain the majority of the world's population, are getting more impoverished. We must collectively recognize and accept the fact that the deepening crisis of development faced by developing countries can only undermine the new world order which we seek to create.

Africa, in particular, has continued to experience the crippling impacts of external debt, deteriorating terms of trade, increasing barriers to trade, declining investment and financial inflows, and capital flight. African countries recognize that the primary responsibility for finding a solution to the economic difficulties facing the continent lies with themselves. Hence they have sought to put in place sound macro-economic policies and adopted very painful programmes of economic reform. However, their best endeavours have continued to be constrained by the prevailing unfavourable international economic climate. We believe that development cooperation should engender genuine interdependence, mutual interest and benefits in the context of global partnership, rather than the old mode of a donor-recipient relationship.

We must recognize the central role of the United Nations in engendering the process of global development. In this regard, my delegation calls for faster progress in the ongoing work on the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development. In the same spirit, we of the African continent urge the international community to deliver on its promises under the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We have just taken part in the mid-term review of its implementation. We recognize that UN-NADAF has had a poor record of implementation. None the less, the United Nations system and the international community at large must deliver on their various commitments.

Nigeria considers as complementary the Secretary-General's United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, particularly as it envisages collaboration and coordination of efforts between the international community, the Bretton Woods financial institutions and the United Nations development agencies on the issue of development. In recognition of its role as the centre for the harmonization of the actions of nations, the United Nations successful hosting of major global conferences on development — from New York in 1990 through Rio in 1992, Vienna in 1993, Cairo in 1994, Copenhagen and Beijing in 1995, to Istanbul in 1996 — deserves our special commendation. The faithful implementation of the decisions and programmes of action of these conferences would assist in bridging the yawning gap between the developing and the developed economies and constitute a substantive benefit to development. Accordingly, we endorse and will continue to give our unqualified support to the hosting of a special session of the General Assembly in 1997 to review the implementation of Agenda 21.

It is hardly necessary to recall that contemporary international relations were founded on the basis of respect for the principles of sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and peaceful co-existence. It is therefore a matter of great concern that these hallowed principles are increasingly being eroded by some powerful States. The United Nations should serve as the bulwark against the imposition of the will of the strong over that of the weak.

Today all countries are engaged in a universal quest for human dignity. It is no longer sufficient for us to be content that our nations have been liberated from oppression and foreign domination. It is now universally acknowledged that the full meaning of national sovereignty cannot be realized unless the individual citizen is free to exercise his true conscience. The rise of this new international conscience is a legitimate extension of the earlier emergence of the new international morality which threw colonialism into disarray.

There ought to be no conflict between national sovereignty and the fundamental rights of the individual. We welcome the growing international concern with human rights, but unless we are careful to strictly define the parameters of what actions justly constitute human rights and what are excesses threatening the security of the State as well as the safety and well-being of the citizens, we could unwittingly be doing a disservice to the essence of human freedom and dignity. We must therefore guard against the use of human rights as a pretext for advancing the individual or collective interests of one section of the international community against those of the other.

In today's world, the collation, delivery and management of information has become an essential component of development. Countries which are better endowed technologically have tended to use that endowment to the disadvantage of the less endowed. There is a need therefore to establish a New World Information Order, which respects the mutual sensitivities of States and protects the values of their differing cultures.

Most developing countries lack the resources and technological capacity for the requisite information delivery. This, in no small measure, constrains their ability to project news of events in their society promptly and effectively, avoiding the tendentious reporting of the media in the developed countries. Nigeria's desire to be friends with all nations, our commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security and our abiding faith in the principles enshrined in the charters of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and our subregional organization, ECOWAS, are demonstrable and beyond question. It was therefore a matter of surprise to the Nigerian Government that this Assembly, in December 1995, adopted resolution 50/199 of 22 December 1995 on the human-rights situation in our country. We believe that this action was based largely on media reporting and without any investigation of the facts of the matter. In spite of the fact that the Nigerian Government was not happy with that action, we subsequently took the initiative to invite the Secretary-General to send a fact-finding mission to Nigeria to ascertain the realities on the ground. That mission visited the country from 28 March to 13 April 1996, and conducted its work unfettered. While the mission's report identified areas of progress in our domestic situation, it also made constructive recommendations. I would like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the Government and the people of Nigeria to those Governments which took a principled position of not supporting the resolution against us. We note with satisfaction that since the United Nations visit, a growing number of countries have reconsidered their position on the matter in favour of Nigeria. We therefore urge the Assembly to take cognizance of these positive developments.

The present Administration in my country has continued to make steady progress in the implementation of its programme of transition to democratic rule. The fundamental difficulties which faced our nation in its previous efforts at building a viable democracy are being progressively addressed, taking into account the objective realities of our national situation, so as to ensure an orderly transition and the establishment of durable democratic structures of governance at all levels in our country. We are encouraged by the successful outcome of the elections which were conducted at the local government level in March this year. The impressive turnout of voters nationwide and the general atmosphere of tranquillity prevailing in our country have elicited goodwill and support from within and outside the country. Political parties have now been registered and full political activities have resumed nation-wide. Our transition to civil rule is now fully on an irreversible course.

In our resolve to ensure that the evolving democratic institutions take root in a fertile economic environment, the Nigerian Government has undertaken economic reforms aimed at promoting rapid growth and sustainable development. The overall macroeconomic performance of the economy has improved with the implementation of deflationary fiscal and monetary measures. Efforts are ongoing to establish a conducive environment for the promotion of investment, both domestic and foreign. Additionally, in recognition of the vital role of finance in the attainment of greater economic efficiency, a wholesale overhaul of the banking and financial services sector has been undertaken to sanitize this important sector of the national economy. It is also worthy of mention that necessary instruments have been put in place in order to intensify economic deregulation and create a conducive environment for domestic and foreign investment.

In the year 2010, Nigeria will be 50 years old as an independent and sovereign nation. It is envisaged that by that date, Nigeria will have achieved economic prosperity, political stability and social harmony. In order to realize this objective, our Government announced, a few weeks ago, a new socio-economic campaign, "Vision 2010", to provide insights into and articulate the goals and objectives of our national economy in a macroeconomic format. It is also intended to focus on the contribution of the private sector as the engine of growth of our economy. We urge the international community to give this programme the necessary support and encouragement.

In order for the United Nations to respond fully to the purpose for which it was established, there is need to strengthen the Organization and to reform its principal organs. Such reform must be system-wide and must be undertaken not for its own sake but to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. It should aim to enhance rather than weaken the capacity of the United Nations to respond effectively to the legitimate aspirations of all its Members.

A vibrant and responsible United Nations requires an assured financial base. The failure or unwillingness of Member States to pay their assessed contributions as and when due is a dereliction of Charter obligations and a threat to the survival of the United Nations. For our part, Nigeria has continued to pay in full and without conditions our assessed contributions to the regular budget including, in particular, for the year 1996. We therefore call on all Member States that have yet to do so to pay their assessed contributions promptly, in full and without conditions.

For several decades, the Middle East question has engaged the attention of the international community. Nigeria has been concerned with the various wars and acts of terrorism which have brought incalculable loss of life and property to that region. There can be no question but that we will continue to support the just struggle of the Palestinian people for their inalienable right to a homeland. There is an increasing awareness, even among the countries of the region, that the right of Israel to live within safe and secure borders can no longer be denied. We call on all parties to intensify their efforts to ensure that the peace process in the Middle East remains on course.

For some time now, the world has been faced with a new upsurge in terrorist incidents. Nigeria condemns unreservedly all acts of terrorism in all its manifestations, as terrorism cannot be a substitute for dialogue and peaceful negotiations in resolving conflicts and misunderstandings between nations. We call on the General Assembly to take additional steps to eradicate the scourge of this menace, which also constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

As the principal organ of the United Nations, the Security Council is in dire need of reform. Its composition must reflect the principle of equity, balance and equitable geographical distribution. It must seek to correct the current anomaly of the non-representation of Africa in the permanent membership category.

We should, however, be mindful that reform of the United Nations, particularly in a period of transition, is an onerous undertaking. My delegation recognizes the vital role of the office of the Secretary-General in overseeing this reform process. In spite of the difficulties the United Nations is passing through and the fluidity of the international situation, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has shown uncommon and unrelenting commitment to meeting the challenges of his office. He deserves our gratitude and continued support. We therefore wish to see him complete the laudable changes he has initiated, some of which are already yielding useful results. In this connection we reiterate and support fully the collective African position that Africa should be given the opportunity to serve two terms in the office of Secretary-General. For that purpose, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali is the only candidate recommended by the Organization of African Unity. Like his predecessors, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali should be given a second term to serve our Organization. It is the only credible thing to do. This is a matter of principle in our country.

My delegation recognizes the enormous tasks facing the Organization as it seeks to concretely address the challenges of the twenty-first century, and we wish to reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to continue to contribute effectively to the realization of the Organization's twin objectives of global peace and prosperity.

The Acting President: I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire, His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marie Kititwa.

Mr. Kititwa (Zaire) (*interpretation from French*): During the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, States renewed our faith in the ideals of the Charter of this Organization. This means that past experience has given us a new vision of the world, a keen awareness of the interdependence of nations, all of which seek to live in a work committed to peace, freedom and justice.

It is with this conviction that my delegation extends to Mr. Razali Ismail the warmest congratulations of the Government of Zaire on his election as President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We would also like to congratulate his fellow Assembly officers. And we also congratulate Mr. Razali's predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral. The competence and intelligence he showed as he guided the work of the fiftieth session earned him the Assembly's appreciation.

We would also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and to the members of the Secretariat, for their untiring efforts to ensure the proper functioning of our Organization and for their clear-sightedness and courage. Zaire also takes this opportunity to express its support for Mr. Boutros-Ghali as he stands for a second term as Secretary-General. This must be our position. His predecessors from other continents had this opportunity; Africa cannot accept otherwise.

During this half century, our free nations have won the greatest victories in the fields of national liberation and political independence. However, as we come to the end of the twentieth century, we still face major challenges in the economic, cultural and social fields, as well as in the area of international peace and security.

Peace, freedom and stability together constitute an indispensable prerequisite for development. No part of our Earth, no country in the world, can be really secure while there are still outstanding hotbeds of tension. And, today, such hotbeds are on the increase, in Africa, in Asia and in Central and Eastern Europe.

The situations in Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Liberia, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and the Middle East are all causes for the concern weighing on international peace and security. The United Nations, which is already seized of these issues, should continue its efforts with the encouragement of every one of us.

In Angola, a neighbouring country to Zaire, my delegation can see positive developments in the domestic situation. The integration of União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) forces into the Angolan National Army should be promoted and encouraged for the good of the entire population of Angola.

For more than two years, Zaire has lived with the tragedies of Burundi and Rwanda, which have lead to a massive influx of refugees from these two countries onto its territory. This grave situation, for which my country is not responsible, has caused and continues to cause us considerable human, material, environmental and other forms of damage. In this respect, the international community has been inexplicably reticent in its actions, as if Zaire should shoulder this burden alone and indefinitely. Zaire is indeed constantly being denigrated even to the extent that it is often falsely accused of supporting armed activity within Rwanda and Burundi. A memorandum from the Government of the Republic of Zaire on the lack of security in northern and southern Kivu has already been submitted to the Secretary-General. A few days ago, the Zairian towns of Bukavu, Uvira and surrounding districts were shelled by armed elements from Rwanda. The Assembly has heard Rwanda's pernicious and false representation of the facts. Inter-ethnic massacres occurred in Rwanda in 1959, 1962 and 1972, not to mention 1994. This genocide in Rwanda was designed, developed and executed in detail and with delight by Rwandans against Rwandans, and by that I mean by past and present leaders in power in Kigali. Members can now understand why Rwanda, nursing its planned aggression against my country, has refused to sign the non-aggression pact patiently negotiated by all the States of Central Africa, including Rwanda.

From this rostrum, my delegation solemnly declares the following: First, Zaire does not accept and will never again accept to act as anyone's scapegoat. Secondly, Zaire will do all it can to defend the security of its population and its borders, and will call on its people and its friends in its defence. Thirdly, Zaire is always prepared to cooperate with the neighbouring Governments and peoples of Rwanda and Burundi to ensure the voluntary and dignified return of refugees to their respective countries. Failing this, following the example of certain European Governments with respect to refugees and people without documentation, Zaire will have no choice but to begin the enforced and unconditional return of such people to their countries of origin.

Fourthly, as President Mobutu stated last year in this forum, Zaire will never accept the de facto transformation of a part of its territory into a "Hutuland", whether through a challenge to its territorial integrity or through the establishment of refugee settlements on its territory. Anyone considering that can forget it.

Fifthly, given the sacrifices endured by its people, Zaire calls on the international community to implement fully the agreements that have been signed, and General Assembly resolution 49/24 of 2 December 1994 on special assistance to countries hosting refugees. Finally, Zaire reaffirms the position it stated at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development regarding the holding of a world conference on refugees and displaced persons to find a comprehensive and lasting solution to the refugee question, which has disastrous consequences for development, human relations and human rights.

The political, economic and social situation in Zaire has deteriorated over six long years of transition. Despite this difficult situation, Zaire has made it a point of honour to pursue its democratic process, committing itself to reestablishing the authority of the State, rebuilding the basic infrastructure, improving the country's economic, financial and monetary situation, ensuring the security of persons and property and observing human rights and fundamental freedoms.

To date, Zaire's main task has been to organize free, democratic and transparent elections. This is why it has set up a National Electoral Commission which is now ready to get down to work, as observed by the delegation recently sent to Zaire by the Secretary-General. Furthermore, the draft electoral law and the bill on the organization of a constitutional referendum are also currently under discussion by the Parliament of Transition. Zaire wishes to reaffirm before the entire world that the democratization of its political system is irreversible, regardless of the difficulties facing our country. For these reasons, the Government of Zaire calls on the international community to give it effective support in the establishment of these new democratic institutions by June 1997 at the latest.

Democracy can only develop and last in a country that enjoys economic development that allows for the protection and promotion of human rights. Some human rights were being promoted in Zaire long before the democratization process. Thus, for example, despite the many social and cultural constraints, Zairian men and women enjoy political and vocational equality, including in terms of remuneration.

The noble mission of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights certainly merits our encouragement. Zaire has nothing to hide, and has thus accepted and accredited the Secretary-General's human rights representative, whose office is in our capital, Kinshasa. Nonetheless, Zaire deplores and vigorously condemns the malicious use of the human rights issue for political ends, as can be seen in the unfounded and unwarranted accusations levelled against it at each annual evaluation session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

Preventive diplomacy should be the very basis of peace-keeping operations. However, preventive diplomacy would be meaningless if the international community were not to grant it a standing, mobile military sector that could be deployed wherever international peace and security were to come under threat. Thus, in the framework of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the countries of this subregion, with the exception of Rwanda, signed the non-aggression pact at the latest Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Yaoundé.

In this first year of the second half-century of the United Nations, safeguarding peace and cohesion among peoples are issues of vital importance to all of us. Zaire considers the adoption of the resolution recommending signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly to be an important step towards comprehensive nuclear disarmament. We do, of course, recognize that this is not a perfect Treaty. It lacks the firm commitment of nuclear-weapon States to renounce the use and threat of use of such weapons in their relations with other States. It also lacks a precise timetable for complete destruction of existing weapons. It does not mention the banning of nuclear tests in laboratories, which is the most sophisticated modern way of developing such weapons. Despite these imperfections, Zaire joined those delegations that sponsored the resolution, and it voted in favour of the text proposed. I wish to announce officially that Zaire will sign this text tomorrow, 4 October.

From this rostrum we appeal to the nuclear-weapon States to put aside their selfish interests and to commit themselves firmly to the new path set out by the Treaty, so that the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons can become a living reality and so that nuclear weapons will no longer threaten future generations, as they have done since the end of the Second World War.

We cannot be at peace with ourselves if we fail to take firm action for conventional disarmament as well.

I come from a region where the merchants of death have dumped tons and tons of conventional weapons that kill people daily. We urge countries that manufacture and sell these instruments of death to stop taking satisfaction in the positive balance sheets of their international trade, which includes arms sales. This is a shame for all mankind. To those who would give lessons of morality and ethics, we would insist that they look at the way they live and stop sowing death and suffering. Life and happiness are the most fundamental of human rights.

In addition to disarmament, worldwide elimination of poverty is fundamental to the strengthening of peace and the realization of comprehensive, sustainable development. At the dawn of the third millennium, it is deplorable to note that more than a billion people today live under conditions of unacceptable poverty and are outside the mainstream of economic and social progress because of imbalances in the international economy.

My delegation hopes that, to remedy this situation, the North-South dialogue will be guided more by the imperatives and interests of mutual advantage and benefit, as well as by genuine interdependence. Solidarity demands fairer prices for commodities, access to the markets of developed countries, easing the debt burden and increased official development assistance so as to ensure sustained growth and sustainable development.

Last year we commemorated our Organization's fiftieth anniversary. That occasion was an opportunity for us to focus on the possibilities for an appropriate reform of this Organization, which is unique in its mission and its impact. I would like to offer my country's reflections on this subject.

We are now living in a period of extraordinary contrasts. Despite the historic successes of our Organization — including independence for many countries, the peace process under way in the Middle East, the end of the South African saga and the perceptible tendency of the United Nations towards universality — we must observe with some bitterness that areas of tension have flared up worldwide, sparking anarchy, despair, poverty and death.

For this reason, Zaire believes that the Security Council, which is the United Nations body that has foremost responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and which by its present membership is no longer representative, should be expanded and its functioning improved. In this exercise, the main concern should be to correct the clear imbalance in that body. Expansion of the Council should take into account the will of many countries to become members and the importance of safeguarding its effectiveness. It should avoid making it a body dependent on the General Assembly. For that reason, we think that equitable geographic representation would appropriately remedy the glaring imbalance in the current representation of the Security Council. We encourage the international community to give deep thought to this question and not to forget that one continent — Africa — is at the greatest disadvantage with the current composition of the Council.

We refuse to be dragged into the dispute over the veto power of permanent members. We are against the emergence of a category of permanent second-class members in the Security Council.

There is a need to look for ways to improve the functioning of the Security Council. It is inconceivable that a State that is concerned in a question being discussed in the Council can participate only in a formal meeting — if there is one — to hear the decision made. If the State were officially involved in the informal consultations on that issue, its direct contribution to the members of the Council could enable them to adopt decisions that would be well thought out and realistic rather than being imposed.

We must have the courage to put an end to the anti-democratic character of this important United Nations body. All the parties involved should be given the opportunity to defend themselves before the members of the Council. This is a basic rule of the administration of justice.

We take note of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable

Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, and we encourage it to pursue its consideration of this matter.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, His Excellency Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov.

Mr. Kamilov (Uzbekistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Let me express my appreciation for the honour of addressing the Assembly. On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I offer my sincerest congratulations to Ambassador Razali Ismail of Malaysia on his election as President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. I am sure that his presidency will enable us successfully to solve many of the urgent issues on the international agenda. I also take this opportunity to extend our appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, President of the historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly, for his valuable guidance and personal involvement in the resolution of issues the world was facing during that period.

We consider the safeguarding of peace and stability in Central Asia and the sustainable development of the region as the most important goal of our cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies. In this context, I would like to outline a number of problems and to make several proposals.

First, regarding regional security, we are of the view that we need to move through regionalism towards the global: global peace can be achieved through stability in the various regions of the world. Regional conflicts are increasingly the direct source of such dangerous challenges and threats as terrorism and violence, the illicit arms trade and drugs trafficking. That is why the main focus of Uzbekistan's initiatives aimed at ensuring security in the Central Asian region is finding ways to settle the conflict in Afghanistan and to stabilize the situation in Tajikistan.

One of the most important elements of these initiatives is an embargo on arms deliveries to Afghanistan. We welcome the start of a discussion of this problem in the Security Council and support proposals for a comprehensive approach and for the convening of an international conference — where, in our view, the main role should be played by the United Nations. Halting arms deliveries to Afghanistan is an indispensable condition for any peace process. An embargo does not mean just any sanctions against Afghanistan; it has to be directed towards those who continue to supply weapons to the area of conflict. The inability of Afghanistan's forces to control its borders requires efforts on the part of the international community to ensure that arms deliveries are ended.

I would like to underline particularly that the Republic of Uzbekistan, more than any other nation in the world, seeks to return to age-old traditional relations of friendship, cooperation and mutual trust with neighbouring Afghanistan. This is the only aim guiding us in our initiatives to promote peace in the Islamic State of Afghanistan. We want Afghanistan to be a stable, indivisible State, open to the outside world for the sake of progress and prosperity. I take this opportunity to appeal once again to the Secretary-General, and to the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly to do their utmost to resolve the Afghan conflict, which poses a serious threat not only to regional security but also to for global security.

We continue to believe that Central Asia has its own characteristics; the positive or negative development of events there can be a catalyst for positive changes or a destructive factor affecting the situation far beyond the region.

Secondly, we must enter the twenty-first century with a new vision of questions of peace and security in a rapidly changing world. The promotion of world peace is accompanied today by intensive debates and disputes on the expansion of the membership of various international bodies and on models for comprehensive world security in the twenty-first century.

While welcoming these aspirations, we must note that each sovereign country in this multi-polar world has the right to decide for itself, in accordance with its national interests, and with its regional identity taken into consideration, whether or not to enter a given union, irrespective of the position of more powerful countries. There is no place for domination or monopoly on the part of other, more powerful, countries in resolving this problem.

Thirdly, as regards our position in relation to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), we consider that the CIS countries can successfully cooperate within the framework of the Commonwealth on a multilateral and bilateral basis. At the same time, we believe that the CIS cannot be treated as a unit under international law. It is unacceptable to let the CIS be transformed into a political or indeed a military-political bloc. Otherwise, the world community will inevitably slide back down into global antagonisms and confrontation. For Uzbekistan, this is fundamentally unacceptable.

Fourthly, Uzbekistan continues to support the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and views as historic the decision to conclude the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, adopted under the auspices of the United Nations, and the beginning of the signature process of the Treaty. We consider this event to be a most important stage in liberating humanity from the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

For our part, the relevant work is being carried out to establish a nuclear-free zone in Central Asia within the international non-proliferation system. We believe that the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan will soon find more detailed interest in the Security Council.

Fifthly, I would like once again to draw the attention of Member States to ecological problems, whose dimensions go beyond State borders. I would especially like to say a word about the problem of the Aral Sea. There have already been a great number of scientific studies and international conferences, including several on the sustainable development of the Aral Sea countries. However, to our great disappointment, we do not see any movement from statements to practical deeds. I would like to note that Uzbekistan supports and considers as timely Great Britain's proposal on the adoption of a special declaration condemning terrorism in all its forms.

For a more effective functioning of United Nations machinery in all areas of activity, we consider it necessary to reform a number of United Nations organs, including the Security Council. This is in line with today's realities. The geo-strategic balance of power raises the question of the expansion of the number of permanent members of the Security Council. We are convinced that such States as Germany and Japan today are fully equipped to be permanent members of the Security Council.

Uzbekistan stands for the constructive reform of the United Nations. In this context, together with other States, including Italy, whose proposals deserve serious attention, we express our sincere desire to ensure that the United Nations is a reliable instrument for maintaining universal peace and stability.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea, His Excellency Mr. Lamine Kamara.

Mr. Kamara (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): It is with real pleasure and great interest that I stand before the Assembly to convey the warm greetings of the people of Guinea and of its President, General Lansana Conte. I join with the many preceding speakers in warmly congratulating Ambassador Razali on his election to the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. His election is testimony to the international community's high regard for Malaysia, his country, with which the Republic of Guinea is honoured to have special ties of friendship and cooperation. I am convinced that under his skilful guidance our work will enjoy every success. I assure him of the support and cooperation of the delegation of Guinea in this task.

My congratulations also go to his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal who, with skill and clearsightedness, enabled the Assembly to address the concerns of the international community during the fiftieth session.

My country, the Republic of Guinea, takes this opportunity to greet and stress our tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose courage, intelligence and tireless efforts have contributed significantly to the attainment of the Organization's noble purposes of peace, justice and progress. This is why my delegation reiterates its support for his candidacy for a second term of office, in accordance with the decision of the most recent Summit Meeting of the Organization of African Unity, held at Yaounde from 8 to 10 July 1996.

A host of challenges are now threatening to upset the balance of the United Nations as we approach the end of the millennium. Despite encouraging results in terms of maintaining international peace and security, many conflicts incompatible with people's aspirations of economic and social progress persist.

In addition to the tensions and conflicts which are tearing peoples apart, of equal concern are the poverty, unemployment, malnutrition and environmental degradation that continue to threaten the existence and future of many populations of the world. Today more than ever there is an urgent need radically to restructure our common institution, the United Nations, so that it can adapt better to current changes, respond appropriately to the expectations of our populations on the major questions which challenge humankind and make the outlook for the future one filled with hope.

The need to prevent and settle conflicts, to support the efforts of States to ensure sustainable development, to provide easier access to suitable housing and to guarantee sufficient food for all are now becoming elements of the promotion of human rights. The same holds true for how we deal with the implications of the globalization of the international economy through reliable mechanisms.

The Republic of Guinea welcomes and strongly encourages the initiative of Japan, our great friend, to design and implement, with our countries, a new development strategy. In this respect, it supports the organization in 1997 in Tokyo of the second International Conference on African Development in which it undertakes to play an active role from the preparatory phase to the end of its work. We are convinced that there is an urgent need and obligation to support firmly a new form of world partnership involving all nations, large and small.

The Republic of Guinea, aware of the fresh challenges facing developing countries on the eve of the third millennium, has decided that its diplomacy should be based on development. This role of diplomatic linchpin in the area of economic advancement will not only strengthen our commitment to subregional and regional integration, but will also increase significantly our participation in international trade.

Questions of international peace and security must remain at the forefront of our concerns. In this respect, my delegation considers that the main role of the United Nations is to continue and intensify the search for ways and means to increase the effectiveness of its action in the areas of the maintenance of peace and of preventive diplomacy.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which I have just signed on behalf of the Government of Guinea. We see this as an important step towards total disarmament. If the Treaty is to attain all of its objectives, the main one being to spare humanity from chaos, it must be signed and respected by all States of the world. To do this, we must calmly and jointly seek to give the assurances of the international community to countries that hesitate to take the decisive step towards the salvation of humanity, so that in the near future the accession of all Member States of the United Nations will enshrine the universality of this important Treaty.

Along the same lines, my delegation calls on the international community to implement global measures to prohibit the illegal traffic of fissile materials, the transborder trafficking in conventional small arms and the production, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel landmines. More than 110 million mines are now scattered around the world, ready to explode at any time, indiscriminately striking down innocent civilian populations.

The Republic of Guinea welcomes the adoption of the text of Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, on Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Such Devices during the Review Conference on the implementation of that Convention.

Other threats weigh heavily on international peace and security. Our Organization must react vigorously to the threats of terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking.

Apart from their many disastrous consequences, these threats, because they are transborder threats, must be considered as real dangers to the health, security and stability both of our populations and of our States.

My delegation, while welcoming the decisions of the Group of Seven and Russia on combatting terrorism and transnational threats, believes that a more complete use of the potential of the United Nations as an instrument for developing joint international strategies and cooperation among all States in the area of fighting crime would allow for more effective coordination of the actions of the international community.

We greatly appreciate the United Nations efforts in other areas as dangerous as terrorism: money-laundering, trafficking in children and all related crimes. Fighting these scourges of our time is everyone's business.

In Africa, tangible progress has been made in the area of peace and democracy. The Republic of Guinea, however, remains concerned by the conflicts which continue to rage on the continent. In the West African subregion, the situations in Liberia and Sierra Leone have tangibly improved, despite some obstacles, which we are striving to overcome within the context of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its peace force, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

The conflict in Liberia has lasted for seven long years. It has caused the death of tens of thousands of people and has led to a mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of refugees to neighbouring States, including my country, the Republic of Guinea, on whose territory are hundreds of thousands of refugees, to whom it offers assistance and protection while at the same time espousing total neutrality in relation to other States members of ECOWAS in the search for a political solution to end this conflict.

The joint efforts of that subregional organization with such major forums as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations led to the signing of the most recent peace agreements at Abuja, Nigeria. The Republic of Guinea, true to its policy of good-neighbourliness and neutrality, firmly supports these agreements, which provide for free and transparent elections in May 1997, and will ensure their strict implementation. An end to this conflict is of interest to the Republic of Guinea, my country, mainly because of the presence on our territory of more than 650,000 refugees compared with a population of 7 million Guineans: one refugee for every 10 inhabitants. This is a situation with rare precedents. Similarly, our participation in the peace effort places a heavy burden on our economy and compromises many of our development projects.

I would like to make an urgent appeal to all the parties concerned with this conflict to implement the Abuja Agreement in full, and in a timely manner, to the benefit of stability in the subregion. The promises of assistance from friendly countries and by the international community could, if kept within the timetable, effectively lead the final settlement plan to success. The initiatives under way in this regard are very encouraging. We welcome the action of the United States of America to assist ECOWAS peace efforts and thank the United States warmly for its latest contribution to the financing of the activities of ECOMOG.

The deterioration of the socio-political climate in Burundi stirs fears today of a repetition of the threats experienced in neighbouring Rwanda, a country with which it shares many social, historical and cultural similarities. The continuation of this crisis also poses a serious threat to stability in the region and to peace. This is why the United Nations, together with neighbouring countries, must be further involved in the search for a final solution to this crisis. We lend our full support to the recent decision taken by the OAU and by the conference of Heads of State of the Great Lakes region, held at Arusha, against the Government stemming from the *coup d'état*. We urge all the sons of Burundi and all those of good-will worldwide to support OAU efforts towards the peaceful settlement of the crises in Burundi and in Rwanda through dialogue, tolerance and reconciliation among the various communities.

As regards Western Sahara, my Government supports the international community's efforts for a peaceful solution to this question, in accordance with the United Nations settlement plan.

With respect to Angola, my delegation strongly encourages the Angolan Government and União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) to persevere along the path to peace and national reconciliation on the basis of the implementation of and respect for the Lusaka Protocol.

Regarding the situation in Somalia, we must say that leaving Somalians to their fate would be contrary to the United Nations ideal of solidarity. Despite the difficulties, the United Nations must continue to be involved actively in the process of restoring peace to that country, through a continuous search for mechanisms to promote national reconciliation, peace, security and stability in Somalia.

On the Middle East, my Government remains greatly concerned by the latest developments in Jerusalem, in Gaza and in the West Bank. The seriousness of these events could jeopardize the peace process. We are convinced that rapid approach of Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip, in Jericho and in the West Bank, and the necessary continuation of the peace process are the responsibility of the entire international community. This is why my delegation solemnly calls upon all the parties involved with the Middle East conflict, especially Israel and its Arab neighbours, to continue courageously on the path of peace, through the pursuit of negotiations, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Peace Agreements.

The Republic of Guinea, convinced that dialogue, the creation of a climate of mutual trust and a greater mutual understanding constitute the only path towards a lasting solution on the Korean peninsula, will continue to encourage the two Korean States to persevere in their efforts towards independent and peaceful reunification.

The signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995 has opened up fresh prospects for the restoration and consolidation of peace in the Balkans. With the recent elections in Bosnia, developments in the situation strengthen the aspirations to peace, stability and security of the region's peoples. We must however remain vigilant. In this respect, my delegation welcomes and supports the efforts of the United Nations, of the Implementation Force (IFOR) and of the international criminal tribunal, aimed at consolidating peace and prosecuting those responsible for crimes against humanity. We invite the international community to display firmness in dealing with this question, in order to extinguish any re-emergence of the practices of "ethnic cleansing". The Organization of the Islamic Conference must be involved more closely in the process begun in this country.

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir continues to deteriorate. At its various summits and ministerial conferences, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has appealed to the international community to urge the protagonists to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions and thus enable the Kashmiri people to exercise freely its right to self-determination. We repeat this appeal, and invite them to begin a constructive dialogue.

The Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which is chaired by the Republic of Guinea, requests the United Nations and the Security Council to shoulder all their responsibilities by becoming decisively involved in the search for peace in the Indian sub-continent. Security Council resolutions 47 (1948), 91 (1951) and 122 (1957) on Jammu and Kashmir, which remain unimplemented after five decades, should not remain among the forgotten resolutions of our system. The Republic of Guinea therefore gives its full support to efforts by the Government of Pakistan aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the problem of Jammu and Kashmir through the opening of talks with India.

My country follows the development of the situation in Afghanistan with the greatest attention. It urges all the parties concerned to work fraternally for the restoration of peace and for national reconciliation.

In the context of its actions within the Organization of the Islamic Conference, of which it is a founding member and current Chairman of its Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, the Republic of Guinea — a secular country with a strong Muslim majority — is dedicated to promoting understanding and tolerance among civilizations, cultures and religions and to contributing to the rise of the forces of progress, justice and democracy in Muslim regions and in the world beyond.

At a time when the world is experiencing profound changes of unequalled complexity and scope, it is essential to promote and consolidate an international environment that will foster peace, growth and development. It is regrettable that Africa does not play a greater role in major international negotiations. We must not continue to be spectators while the rest of the world carries out negotiations which involve us directly or indirectly. We are convinced that Africa has a role to play in this area.

In the new configuration of today's world, a country such as the Republic of Guinea — through its policy of peace and because its interests do not diverge from those of other regions of the world; through the nature of its sometimes exceptional relations with the parties in latent or overt conflicts in various regions; through its membership in several geo-political groups, several cultural zones and several continental and non-African organizations — could, where desirable, play a useful role in international negotiations.

The permanence and fairness of development will be illusory so long as modalities that preserve and perpetuate present inequalities continue to govern international relations. Economic and social development, whose correlation with international peace and security is clear, requires of States and of the international institutions that are our development partners a pragmatic and coherent approach which takes into account the specific socio-economic needs and realities of our States.

My delegation is pleased with the efforts that have already been made in the area of debt relief for developing countries and appeals to the solidarity of the international community for a real increase in development assistance, whose current tendency to decrease is a real source of concern for us in the face of our pressing development needs. In this regard, we welcome the decisions of the last summit of the Group of Seven, held at Lyon.

Although the conclusion of the Uruguay Round opens up new prospects for the stimulation of international trade, it is essential to introduce new, energetic measures to save Africa from marginalization and impoverishment. It is a human, social, political and economic imperative for the international community and for all the actors and partners in development, in their own specific actions, to work responsibly for a more just and equitable framework for international trade, favouring a free and democratic economic partnership.

We therefore congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for his praiseworthy efforts which have made it possible to develop the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. My country would like to express the hope that this will not suffer from the same lethargy which the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development suffered from. Such a failure would be highly prejudicial and damaging to the credibility of the United Nations. In this regard, my delegation seeks the urgent implementation of this ambitious Initiative, for it is undeniable that it is one of the best ways of giving development a chance and new hope for future generations.

We would also like to express our satisfaction at the convening of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and to support the important resolutions arising from that Conference promoting access to suitable housing for all.

Along these lines, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to welcome the holding of the World Food Summit, which will take place from 13 to 17 November 1996 at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

My Government believes that the enhancement of our Organization's effectiveness lies above all in the redefinition of some of its objectives, especially in adapting the functioning of its organs to reflect better the new face of international relations. With regard to the Security Council, my Government fully supports the review and expansion of its current composition on the basis of equitable geographical representation so that the southern hemisphere — which since 1945 has been the theatre of many conflicts — can participate in its activities which are fundamental to the maintenance of international peace and security.

My wish, therefore, is for the United Nations to carry out its restructuring. Whether with regard to revitalizing the General Assembly and its organs, to expanding or strengthening the Security Council, to rationalizing activities and procedures, to redefining programmes and mandates or to consolidating the financial and material bases of the Organization, all Member States must work with courage, clarity and a high sense of responsibility for the proper implementation of these reforms in order to give the United Nations reliable and effective institutions worthy of the vision and aspirations of our peoples.

That is why my delegation, while expressing its satisfaction at the evident willingness and efforts of our Organization to adapt to the world's changes, is in favour of strengthening its potential and improving the interaction among the various organizations of the United Nations system and other development partners.

In conclusion, the Republic of Guinea would like to express the hope that courageous and realistic decisions will come out of the work of this session, and it remains convinced that — apart from divergences and differences in approach in the search for ways and means to achieve solutions to the problems facing our States — the United Nations community which we constitute will continue to work successfully for peace, security and the well-being of all, in the spirit of active solidarity, as the founding fathers of this Organization dreamed.

The Acting President: The Observer of Palestine has asked to be allowed to reply to a statement made by one of the speakers in the general debate. I shall call on him on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988, and particularly on the basis of the ruling made by the President of the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and of the precedents established in similar circumstances during subsequent sessions of the General Assembly.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The representative of Israel, Mr. David Levy, spoke before the General Assembly this morning. In his statement he confirmed Israel's defiance of the international community and its violation of Security Council resolutions concerning a very important question, namely the legal status of the Holy City of Al Quds. In speaking of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel he repeated the myths of thousands of years.

As a matter of fact, United Nations organs, and especially the Security Council in many resolutions, have confirmed that East Jerusalem is an integral part of the Arab territories occupied since 1967, to which the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 is applicable. The Security Council has declared null and void all legislative and administrative measures adopted by Israel to change the city's legal status or demographic composition. It has called upon Israel to annul these measures and not to repeat them, and for Member States not to establish diplomatic missions in Jerusalem.

All the States of the world have agreed not to recognize illegal Israeli measures which would name Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This applies not only to occupied East Jerusalem, but also to West Jerusalem, which was under Israeli control before 1967.

We should not forget that General Assembly resolution 181 (II), which Israel considers the legal basis for its existence, decided to consider Jerusalem a separate international entity. In addition to this, we must remember that both the Israeli and Palestinian sides agreed, in the 1993 Declaration of Principles, which is binding on both parties, to negotiate the status of Jerusalem in the second phase of negotiations.

Consequently, any Israeli measures to establish a new *fait accompli* in Jerusalem or to enforce its claims violate agreements between the two parties. First and foremost among those measures was the opening of a tunnel under the western wall of the Holy Shrine. Prior to that, Israel destroyed the community centre of the Burj Al-Laqlaq Association in the Old City.

This leads us to the other policies pursued by the Government of Israel since it assumed power. I can refer here to the non-implementation of provisions of the Agreement that are now due to be implemented, especially withdrawal from the city of Al-Khalil and from Area B; the continued blockade of Palestinian territory; the prohibition of the movement of persons and goods in violation of the economic part of the Agreement; and the continued settlement policy on occupied Palestinian lands, including Jerusalem, which is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and of agreements between the parties.

We view as positive the meetings between leaders of the two parties, including the summit meeting which was organized by President Clinton and which ended yesterday. Yet, regrettably, these meetings have not achieved the necessary changes in Israeli policies and positions. The situation created by these policies is extremely dangerous, because they have caused unbearable suffering on the part of the Palestinian people.

We must admit, before the international community, that the Middle East peace process is facing a great danger. It is facing a serious crisis because of Israeli policies and positions. We hope that — with the help of the international community and the United Nations and with the direct contribution of the co-sponsors of the peace process and of the other actors in Europe — the status of the negotiations can return to what it was before the recent crisis. This should include the closing of the tunnel in accordance with Security Council resolution 1073 (1996), and an end to the blockade of Palestinian towns and villages, in which tanks are being used. We also hope to see a serious change in the Israeli position, with a commitment to the effective implementation of the agreements that have been entered into and with Israel refraining from any act that would violate the agreements and render them useless.

Let us work together to rescue the peace process and to agree on the basis of these agreements. We hope to reach a peaceful and just solution to the Palestinian question and to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Programme of work

The President in the Chair.

The President: I should like to inform Members that the General Committee will meet on Tuesday, 8 October 1996, at 9.15 a.m. in Conference Room 3 to consider a request for the inclusion of an additional item, entitled "Observer status for the International Seabed Authority", which has been circulated in document A/51/231.

Announcement

The President: I would like to remind representatives of the following dates: The 1996 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities will be held in conjunction with the United Nations/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations pledging conference for the World Food Programme. The Pledging Conference for Development Activities will be held on the mornings of Monday and Tuesday, 4 and 5 November. The Pledging Conference for the World Food Programme will take place on Monday, 4 November, in the afternoon. Both Conferences will be opened by the Secretary-General on the morning of 4 November.

The announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1997 programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will take place on Wednesday, 13 November, in the morning.

The announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1997 programmes of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East will take place on Thursday, 5 December, in the morning.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.